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A  
CONCISE EXPOSITION  
OF  
THE APOCALYPSE,  
SO FAR AS  
THE PROPHECIES ARE FULFILLED :  
TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED  
THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY  
EPITOMISED :  
AND  
A VOCABULARY OF SYMBOLS,  
WITH  
SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY FOR THEIR INTERPRETATION.

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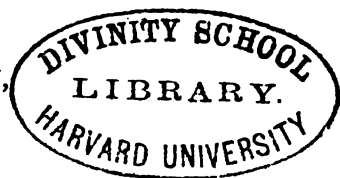
‘ The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.’

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By J. R. PARK, M.D.

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SECOND EDITION,  
MUCH ENLARGED.



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LONDON :  
PRINTED FOR JAMES DUNCAN,  
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1825.

1389

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## PREFACE.

THE following Treatise was written before the author had perused any commentary on the Apocalypse more recent than that of Archdeacon Woodhouse, with the exception of Mr. Clarke's ingenious work on the Dragon and the Beast; nor was he aware that the subject had since employed so many able writers.

But instead of their works rendering superfluous the publication of his own, they have rather furnished additional motives for it; as none of them has pursued the same plan, or taken the same view of the subject.

This peculiarity consists in regarding the Apocalypse as altogether a spiritual, and not a political prophecy; that is, as relating exclusively to the progress of true religion, and not to the history of the Roman Empire.

This general principle is derived from the excellent work of Archdeacon Woodhouse, which the writer has adopted as his guide; whose translation he has for the most part preferred; and from whose erudition he has received assistance at almost every step of his progress. If, as he proceeded, he has found himself obliged to deviate from the path of his excellent conductor more frequently than he expected at the outset, he trusts it will be found, that those deviations regard the letter only, and not the spirit of the work in question.

The reasons for adopting the view of the subject

which has been stated, will be found in Note A, which, with the rest of the Appendix, was written after the author had perused the more recent commentaries; and was intended partly to meet such objections as that perusal had suggested, and partly to strengthen those arguments, which, though convincing to himself, as stated by Archdeacon Woodhouse, yet appear not to have succeeded generally in carrying conviction to the minds of others.

The Apocalypse being a subject upon which a short treatise may tempt many readers who would be deterred from the perusal of a larger volume, the original design of the writer was, to compress the interpretation into as narrow a compass as the prophecy itself, and to devote not more than an equal space to historical references.

Though unable fully to attain this object, he has adhered to it as closely as he could, and studiously confined his references to a few works, in order that the originals may be easily consulted by those who desire it.

On the subject of the authenticity of the Revelation, nothing is offered in the present Treatise; for were such an enquiry not beyond the reach of the writer, there appears nothing wanting to the satisfactory evidence adduced in the valuable dissertation of Archdeacon Woodhouse. While the external testimony of its genuineness is there shown to be as strong as that of almost any other part of the Sacred Writings, the internal evidence of its divine origin will, it is hoped, speak sufficiently for itself.

G.

## PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE historical Epitome, and the Vocabulary of symbols, prefixed to the prophecy, are intended to supply deficiencies, which were felt, but could not be remedied by the writer, when the Exposition was first published. Besides these, the reader will find other additions, that will, it is hoped, render the work not less acceptable. Of these, the principal is an interpretation of the four living Creatures, and the Vision of the Divine Glory, subjoined to the Appendix, in Note O.

With regard to the historical Epitome, it is possible that the extraordinary coincidence between the history and the prophecy, may excite a suspicion, that the former, being written avowedly for the illustration of the latter, presents only a partial view of events. To this the writer has to say in reply, that, beyond the exclusion of matters irrelevant to the spiritual progress of our religion, he has not made so much as a selection of events; having studied only to give a faithful transcript of the original, and by condensing the subject to present the characteristics of each period within the narrowest compass.

If then such a suspicion arise, it must attach to the original history, and not to the abridgement; and it will surely be the first time that Mosheim has been suspected of falsifying history, for the

purpose of accommodating it to the fulfilment of prophecy.

Some periods of the history have indeed been more briefly treated of by the writer than others, for which the object in view will furnish, it is trusted, both a reason and an apology.

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE scriptural reader is generally deterred from the study of the Apocalypse, by the difficulties he encounters, on opening this mysterious book. These difficulties are two-fold, in part arising from the metaphorical language in which it is written, and in part from the events to which it relates; nor are they effectually removed by any treatise that the writer has yet met with.

The reason of this admits of easy explanation, as arising almost entirely from the prevailing attachment to the plan of political interpretation in a prophecy, the subject of which is altogether spiritual. The progress of true religion in the heart of man, or the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth, and not the fortunes of the Roman empire, as Archdeacon Woodhouse justly observes, is the subject of this prophecy.

*'Non res Romanæ, perituraque regna.'*

Many indeed admit the truth of this statement, which it seems almost impossible to deny; but then it is contended, that some political events are vitally connected with the progress of our religion, and inseparable from its history; while it is supposed that no precise or evident fulfilment of the prophecy can be founded upon events so vague and indefinite as changes of opinion, or moral revolutions.

Readily allowing that there are political occur-

rences closely interwoven with the history of Christianity, such as the rise of the Saracen empire with the Mahommedan religion; still the writer conceives that there are two ways of viewing these events, one of which regards their political, and the other their spiritual influence. The relative advantage of each mode of exposition, the reader will find compared as he proceeds, and the superiority of the spiritual clearly displayed; while in regard to precision and distinctness of fulfilment, he will also find the political and the spiritual view contrasted in Note A. in the Appendix.

One difficulty in the spiritual plan of interpretation is certainly to be regretted; it is one however, arising, not out of the nature of the subject, but from the want of any standard work, to which the reader can be referred for a compendious view of the spiritual progress of our religion. To select this out of works of general history, is a task requiring much time and labour; and to look for it even in ecclesiastical histories, demands more leisure than the generality of readers can bestow; as these also contain much that regards the political history of the church, besides other matters foreign to the subject in question.

To obviate this difficulty, the reader is now presented with an Epitome of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, as translated by Dr. Maclaine, occupying in Dr. Coote's late edition, six 8vo. vols. but here abridged, by excluding most of the details of church government, with the history and succession



of popes ; the particulars of the different heresies and controversies ; the description of various rites and ceremonies, besides an abundance of other matters, not essential to the subject of the prophecy ; while the remainder is compressed into the narrowest compass, consistent with perspicuity.

The arrangement adopted in the Epitome, is nearly the same as that in the original, except that the division of the history into eastern and western, is more distinctly marked, as it is also in the prophetic account ; and the chronological order differs in a few instances, where the prophecy evidently comprises a longer period than a century ; such is the case in the sixth Trumpet ; in which, besides other circumstances that denote this, intimation is given of a wide chasm in the series of events, by the omission of what was uttered by the voices of the seven Thunders.

The other source of difficulty in the study of the Apocalypse, was stated to be the nature of the metaphorical language, in which the prophecy is written. To remove this, a glossary of the principal symbols employed, is prefixed to the exposition, with scriptural authority for the meaning attached to each ; in order that the reader may distinctly see that this language is not explained in an arbitrary or fanciful manner, to suit the views of the expositor, but in strict conformity with the custom of our Saviour himself and his apostles, who constantly made use of the same metaphors.



**THE**  
**HISTORY**  
**OF**  
***CHRISTIANITY,***  
**EPITOMISED.**



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# *History of Christianity,*

## IN THE EAST.



### THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

A.D. 32 to 100.—THE records of the human race furnish no parallel to the history of the Apostolic age, whether we regard the magnitude of the event which distinguished it, or the means whereby this was accomplished. The religion of the world was changed, without external force, or any obvious means beyond the native energy of truth. Paganism, a fabric raised by human skill, which had stood for thousands of years, fell before the word of God. The simple narrative of twelve plain and illiterate men effected this revolution; the earnestness of self-devotion, and the persuasive eloquence of conviction being the chief means they employed; for the efficacy of their miraculous powers, was frequently rendered abortive, as appears from their own statement, by the universal belief in magic and the agency of demons. To the character of the apostles, as plain and illiterate men, one exception alone presents itself in Saint Paul, who from being the most virulent enemy, became after his conversion, the most powerful and successful defender of Christianity.

The history of the Acts of the Apostles, well known to every christian, supercedes the necessity for further detail. The simplicity of truth

appears in every page of this narrative, presenting a picture of constancy unshaken amidst severest trials, of courage that no dangers could appal, of virtue the most heroic, with an utter contempt for riches and honors, a purity of heart and mind, and an integrity of life and conduct, which will in vain be sought for at any subsequent period. By such means did the simple truths of the gospel triumph over the mysterious doctrines, and gorgeous rites of Paganism.

At this time all the nations of the earth, except the Jews, had long been addicted to idolatry ; but each avoided the imputation of worshipping inanimate objects, by pretending that the divinity adored under an image of brass, wood, or stone, was actually present in it, when duly and properly dedicated. The deities represented by these statues, were as often men distinguished for their vices, as eminent for their virtues ; and the form of worship paid to them was not unfrequently such as violated outward decency ; consequently such a religion was ill calculated to exalt the mind, or improve the morals of mankind.

Nor were the more enlightened of the heathens blind to its vices and absurdities ; but in vain attempted to dispel this cloud of darkness by various systems of philosophy, some of which were not devoid of reason, nor even destitute of sublimity. To accomplish this change was in the power of christianity alone, and the utmost efforts of heathen genius served only to mislead, and subsequently be-

come the means of corrupting the more simple and sublime doctrines of the gospel.

The systems of philosophy that chiefly prevailed at this time, may be comprised under the two following heads, one including that of the Greeks, adopted also by the Romans, and the other that of the Orientals, which had its votaries in Persia, Syria, Chaldea, Egypt, and even among the Jews.

The Grecian and Roman philosophy was divided into different sects; as the Epicureans, the Academics, the Stoics, the Eclectics, and others. Among their philosophers, no one was held in higher estimation than Plato; who taught—‘that the universe was governed by a Being glorious in power and wisdom, and possessed of perfect liberty and independence.’ He extended also the views of mortals beyond this life, and shewed them prospects in futurity, adapted to excite their hopes, and to work upon their fears—thereby to deter them from vice, and to impel them to virtue.

The Oriental philosophy was also divided into different sects. The doctrine of the Magi, which flourished in Persia, and was received among the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Syrians, and Egyptians, and by some of the Jews, taught that the universe was governed by two principles, one good, and the other evil.

But the system which was afterwards most detrimental to Christianity, was the doctrine dignified by the title of gnosis or science, from the Greek word γνῶσις, whence is derived the term Gnostics.

This doctrine, which from its resemblance to Platonism was erroneously supposed by some to be derived from it, admitted the existence of an Eternal Nature, in whom dwelt the fulness of wisdom and goodness, but supposed the world to have been created by some inferior intelligence, to whom the human race also owed their existence. Man was supposed to be formed out of matter and spirit; the spirit pure and celestial in its origin, but joined to, or imprisoned in the body, formed out of corrupt matter. All the baser passions and impurer desires were ascribed to the latter, while the more noble feelings, were believed to owe their origin to the former, which was regarded as an emanation from the Deity. It was also taught, that as this union with matter was liable to corrupt the purity of the spirit, so to prevent this effect, various means had been adopted by the Supreme Being, especially by divine messengers, sent to admonish and reform the human race. Those who disregarded these admonitions were supposed, at the dissolution of their mortal bodies, to pass into new bodies, until their purification was effected; while those who resisted the corruption, were conceived to ascend and revert to their supreme parent.

Whatever may be thought of these refined speculations, they could have little influence over the multitude, addicted to the grossest superstitions, and accustomed to the practice of rites, which tended to destroy rather than inculcate morality and virtue.

Far otherwise was it with the religion of Jesus ; its morality comprised in this short maxim, 'do unto others as you would they should do unto you,' was not only perfect, but adapted to the meanest capacity ; and the reward he promised, of eternal life, was assured by his own resurrection, and thus furnished an adequate motive for compliance with his precepts.

By the Jewish nation, the advantages of an eternal but distant reward were not duly appreciated ; their expectation having long been fixed on the advent of a temporal prince in the person of the Messiah ; and this blessing, rejected by God's chosen people was offered to, and accepted by the Gentile or Pagan nations.

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#### SECOND CENTURY.

A. D. 100 to 150.—The consequent corruptions of Christianity were not however unforeseen by omniscience, and that foreknowledge is amply displayed in the book of prophecy. The apostolic age had scarcely elapsed before the seeds of corruption were sown, and christians began to divide themselves into different sects, each striving to force the doctrines of the gospel into conformity with the philosophical system, which they had previously embraced. During the lives of the apostles, these attempts towards the perversion of christianity were attended with little success ; they, however, acquired strength by degrees, and imper-

ceptibly laid the foundation of those sects, whose animosities and disputes produced afterwards such trouble and perplexity in the christian church.

Among these the Gnostics and Nicolaitans, in the first century, appear to be the earliest. In the second century, we find new sects starting up, each tending further to corrupt the pure religion of Jesus, the venerable simplicity of which was not of long duration. 'Its beauty was gradually effaced by the laborious efforts of human learning, and the dark subtleties of imaginary science. Acute researches were employed upon religious subjects; ingenious decisions were pronounced, and the tenets of a chimerical philosophy were imprudently incorporated into the christian system.'

Nor were these corruptions confined to the doctrines, but extended also to the practice of christianity; 'in this century many unnecessary rites and ceremonies were added to the christian worship; changes, which were offensive to wise and good men, but pleasing to the multitude, ever more delighted with the pomp and splendour of external institutions, than with the native charms of rational and solid piety.'

The design of this injudicious change was to facilitate conversion by accommodating the form of worship to the prejudices of both Pagans and Jews, who were accustomed to 'temples, altars, victims, and mysteries.' But the divisions and schisms occasioned by these innovations, were productive of other evils besides that of corrupting the purity and

simplicity of christianity. They engendered a feeling of heat and animosity, inseparable from sectarian zeal, but utterly at variance with christian charity. And they further laid the foundation for those enormities with which bigotry and persecution have subsequently disgraced the annals of the nominally christian church.

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#### SECOND CENTURY, CONTINUED.

A. D. 150 to 200.—Injurious as were these schisms among the early christians, and pernicious as were the corruptions which thus flowed from the desire of accommodating christianity to the doctrines of the heathen philosophy, innovations yet more lamentable accompanied, or soon followed these, and at length totally changed the aspect and character of the religion taught by Jesus.

Among these, the most prominent at the period we have now reached, was the introduction of fanaticism and superstition, giving rise to monasticism, and the doctrine of purgatory. These changes are by the ecclesiastical historian traced up to the second century, as follows.—‘Towards the close of this century, a new sect of philosophers arose; spread with amazing rapidity through the greatest part of the Roman Empire, swallowed up almost all the other sects, and proved extremely detrimental to the cause of christianity.’

This sect, he informs us, chose to be called Platonists, though far from adhering to the tenets of

**Plato.** On the contrary, they selected from all systems whatever they thought conformable to the truth, and were hence called Eclectics also. To this sect belonged Ammonius Saccas, a celebrated teacher of Alexandria ; who attempted the gigantic project of a reconciliation, or coalition of all sects, philosophical as well as religious, with christianity. To accomplish this end, the whole history of the heathen Gods was turned into an allegory, and the doctrine of every sect, including that of christianity itself, was more or less warped to suit his purpose."

This philosophy, countenanced by Clemens, and imprudently embraced by Origen, was highly detrimental to christianity, by introducing an allegorical subtlety, and a mystical obscurity into doctrines revealed with the utmost plainness. Nor did the evils of the Ammonian philosophy end here, for to ' this monstrous coalition of heterogeneous doctrines, its fanatical author added a rule of life and manners, which carried an aspect of high sanctity, and uncommon austerity. The people he allowed to live according to the laws of their country, and the dictates of nature ; but another rule was laid down for the wise. They were to raise the soul, whose origin was celestial and divine, above terrestrial things, by high efforts of holy contemplation. They were ordered to extenuate by hunger, thirst, and other mortifications, the sluggish body, which confines the activity, and restrains the liberty of the immortal spirit ; that thus in this life they might enjoy communion with the Supreme Being, and as-



cend after death, active and unencumbered to the universal Parent, to live in his presence for ever.'—

'He thus gave occasion to that slothful and indolent course of life which continues to be led by myriads of monks, retired into their cells, and sequestered from society, to whom they are neither useful by their instruction, nor by their examples.'—'To this philosophy we may trace, as to their source, a multitude of vain and foolish ceremonies, proper only to cast a veil over truth, and to nourish superstition.'

Respecting the state of the soul after death, Jesus had simply declared, that the good would be received into heaven, and the wicked be sent to hell.

'But this plain doctrine was soon disfigured, when Platonism began to affect Christianity. Plato had taught that the souls of heroes and illustrious men alone ascended after death to the mansions of light and felicity; while those of the generality, weighed down by their lusts and passions, sank into the infernal regions; whence they were not permitted to emerge, before they were purified from their turpitude and corruption.'

'This doctrine was seized with avidity by the Platonic Christians, and applied as a commentary upon that of Jesus. Hence a notion prevailed, that the martyrs only entered upon a state of happiness, immediately after death; and that for the rest a certain obscure region was assigned, in which they were to be imprisoned until the second coming of Christ, or at least until they were purified from

their various pollutions. This doctrine, enlarged by the irregular fancies of injudicious men, became a source of innumerable errors, vain ceremonies, and monstrous superstitions.' Thus we see the doctrine of purgatory, and the rise of monasticism, traced up to this period; and the same century gave rise also to that extravagant species of fanaticism, which consisted in subjecting the body to various kinds of suffering and privation, in order to purify the soul, and render it acceptable to heaven.

The height to which this extravagance was afterwards carried, almost exceeds the bounds of belief; some being said to have passed their days standing erect on the summit of lofty pillars, others in the form of a cross, while some perished in the attempt to fast forty days, in imitation of our Saviour. It is however the origin only of this species of fanaticism, that belongs to the second century; it did not reach its *acmè* till a much later period.

In this age of spiritual darkness and superstition, a faint ray of light beams through, as appears from the following citation, (Mosheim, V. 1. P. 195), 'But however the doctrines of the gospel may have been abused by the commentaries of different sects, all were unanimous, in regarding with veneration the holy scriptures, as the great rule of faith and manners.' To this consolatory circumstance, prophetic allusion seems to be made, in the charge given under the third seal,—'See thou hurt not the oil and the wine.'

## THIRD CENTURY.

A. D. 200 to 250.—The effects of thus corrupting the purity of the Christian religion, shortly became conspicuous, as might be expected, first in the lives and conduct of the clergy, and then of the laity also. A rapid decline of the piety and zeal, of the meekness and humility which distinguished the teachers of the apostolic age is stated to have soon taken place. During the first and second century, ‘a bishop was a person, who acted not so much with the authority of a master, as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful servant, performing divine worship, instructing the people, attending the sick, . . . and while his office was not only laborious, but in those times singularly dangerous, its revenues were extremely small, the church having no fixed income, but depending on the gifts or oblations of the multitude, which though inconsiderable, were however to be divided among the bishops, prelates, deacons, and the poor.’

But the synods or councils, which began to be assembled about the middle of the second century, afforded them an opportunity of extending the limits of their authority, of turning their influence into dominion, and led to the institution of metropolitans and patriarchs, thus opening a way to the gratification of pride and ambition. ‘They had moreover, (as Mosheim sarcastically observes,) the good fortune to persuade the people, that they were

entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Jewish priesthood, which was a new source of honor and profit to them.' At length in the third century, he describes the bishops as having in many places assumed a princely authority ; as having appropriated to their evangelical function, the splendid ensigns of temporal majesty—' A throne surrounded with ministers, exalted above his equals, the servant of the meek and humble Jesus, and sumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and minds of the multitude into an ignorant veneration for their arrogated authority. The example of the bishops was ambitiously imitated by the presbyters, who neglecting the sacred duties of their station, abandoned themselves to the indolence and delicacy of an effeminate and luxurious life. The deacons beholding the presbyters deserting their function, boldly usurped their rights and privileges ; and the effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the sacred order.'

But luxury and ambition were far from being the only vices of the clergy at this early period. ' Many, to please the people, and obtain the reputation of superior sanctity, continued in a life of celibacy, but at the same time formed connections with those women who had made vows of perpetual chastity ; and it was an ordinary thing for an ecclesiastic to admit one of these fair saints to his bed.'

Such testimony, reluctantly given by the Ecclesiastical historian, speaks volumes in proof of the utter extinction of piety and morality in this age ;

and shews that the spirit at least of Paganism was fast gaining ground in the church, if the outward form and profession of it were not yet established.

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### THIRD CENTURY, CONTINUED.

A. D. 250 to 312.—One circumstance must at least have had a salutary tendency, though it was not adequate to the purpose of checking altogether the career of pride and profligacy in these unworthy ministers of the gospel ; and that was the uncertain tenure by which they held the means of gratifying these passions, seeing the storms of persecution from their Pagan rulers, which continually threatened them, and not unfrequently burst over their heads.

There are indeed writers who maintain that the histories of the earlier persecutions have been much exaggerated, and perhaps the maxim of ‘ *medio tutissimus* ’ may be applicable here.

If the Christians suffered along with others in the first century, under a Nero and a Domitian, it is what might be expected from such monsters as these ; but the senate annulled the cruel edicts of Nero, and Nerva abrogated the sanguinary laws of his predecessor Domitian. And there were, at the beginning of the second century, no laws in force against the Christians. But still the custom of persecuting them prevailed, and their destruction not unfrequently followed from the rage of the populace, instigated by the priesthood. This hap-

pened even under the reign of Trajan, as we gather from the letters of Pliny, who was instructed by his master to abstain from seeking after the Christians, and to punish with death such only as refused to return to the religion of their ancestors. This edict afforded the precarious means of escape by secrecy ; but had not the custom of persecuting them continued to prevail, a renewal of this edict would not have been called for under Adrian ; who farther prohibited their being put to death, unless convicted of crimes committed against the laws. This edict was rendered still more favorable to them under Antoninus Pius, who made it a capital offence to accuse them falsely, or without bringing sufficient proof of their guilt ; but it was suffered to slumber again under Marcus Aurelius, for this prince forgot, with regard to the Christians, those principles of justice and clemency, which regulated his conduct towards others. Under Commodus they suffered very little ; but most rigorous edicts were issued against them under Severus. From his death to the reign of Maximin, their condition was every where supportable, and in many places prosperous. But with Maximin their sufferings were renewed ; till at length this storm also was followed by a calm, in which they enjoyed for many years a happy tranquillity.

But on the accession of Decius Trajan, in the year 249, the storm fell upon them with ten-fold violence ; and compared with this, all their former sufferings may be considered as light and trivial.

For this prince resolved upon extirpating all the Christians without exception, or compelling them to return to the profession of Paganism; and charged his prætors with the execution of laws to this effect, under pain of death. The flame of this persecution was at length beginning to burn with somewhat less fury, when it was reanimated by the successors of Decius, Gallus and his son Volusianus, and not suffered to decline until the accession of Valerian, in the year 254. But this intermission lasted only three years, when the sufferings of the Christians were renewed under the influence of Macrianus, a bigoted Pagan, who had gained the ascendancy over the mind of Valerian. Under his son Gallienus, peace was once more restored to the church, and continued with only occasional interruptions, to the end of this century; but the beginning of the next presents the most horrible of all the persecutions, which began in the reign of Dioclesian, at the instigation of his son-in-law Galerius, and raged almost without intermission, for ten years together. During this period, every kind of torture that cruelty could devise was employed, to force them to renounce their religion; and such were the extent and success of these endeavours, that they are represented as having nearly proved fatal to the cause of Christianity.

Their sufferings, however, from Pagan persecution at least, were now drawing to a close; for early in the fourth century, the Emperor Constantine, either from conviction or policy, embraced

Christianity, which henceforth became the religion of the empire. The story of the miraculous cross, which is said to have appeared to him in the air, and to have wrought his conversion, would leave less room for doubt, respecting the Emperor's sincerity, had he previously shewn any indication of religious principles whatever, or had his subsequent life and conduct accorded with those of the religion he embraced ; neither of which was the case. It appears most probable that policy urged him to embrace a religion, which experience had proved that force could not suppress.

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#### FOURTH CENTURY.

A. D. 312 to 400.—It is customary with commentators on the Apocalypse, to date the period of the church's prosperity, from the commencement of the fourth century, when Pagan persecution ceased ; but it is only in regard to worldly splendour, that ecclesiastical history will justify this representation. For the purity of religion, and the prosperity of the church bore no relation to each other in their progress. On the contrary, as one advanced, the other receded ; and if before this period the clergy had ceased to set the example of Christian meekness and piety, it is from this time that their conduct became decidedly antichristian. For it would seem as if the last restraint upon impiety and immorality were withdrawn, when persecution ceased, and the road to wealth and honor



was thrown open to them. Besides which, the corruptions that flowed from the nominal advancement of Christianity to the imperial throne were such, that the Christians may rather be said to have relapsed into heathenism, than the Pagans to have become Christians.

If prior to this period the heat of sectarean animosity had impaired the feeling of charity and brotherly love amongst the followers of Jesus, their hatred of each other is henceforward described as 'exceeding the fury of wild beasts against men.'—In the feuds of Christian bishops contending for power and supremacy, slaughter and bloodshed became frequent and familiar. Thousands of Christians perished by the hands of each other in the Donatist faction, which originated in a contest for worldly power. But the hatred excited by religious animosity for the most trifling disagreement in the articles of belief, utterly extinguished every feeling of humanity. Burning alive, a practice introduced by the first Christian Emperor, became shortly after the common punishment for those who were termed heretics. In the reign of Valens, no less than eighty ecclesiastics, as related by the historian Socrates, were at one time conveyed on board a ship, which was then set on fire, and they were all inhumanly burnt to death.

The persecution of the Pagans does not, indeed, furnish a list of martyrs like that of the Christians, for this obvious reason, that the Pagans had no taste for martyrdom, and readily embraced the alterna-

tive offered to them. 'There is not, I think,' says Dr. Jortin, 'one Pagan on record, who died a martyr for his religion in those days.' Vol. 3. P. 242. But it must not be supposed that Christian forbearance was the cause of this, for the practice, which they had so loudly condemned when themselves were the sufferers, they soon learned to retort upon their Pagan persecutors. Little indeed, has been said by Christian writers on this topic; but the Theodosian Code, as Dr. Jortin remarks, stands a shameful monument of this Antichristian spirit. By this code, 'if a sacrifice was offered up in a private place with the knowledge of the owner, the place was to be confiscated. If not, twenty-five pounds weight of gold were to be paid, and the penalty was the same for a sacrifice offered in a temple. If any one consulted the entrails of a victim, to discover future events, it was high treason.' In the pillage and demolition of the temples, monks were the dragoons usually employed. The Jews too, were no less the objects of persecution than the Pagans; but however severe the laws were against them, Dr. Jortin declares, 'that it was safer in the fourth and fifth centuries, to be a Jew or a Pagan, than to be a heretic or schismatic, or a Christian of this or that denomination.' Vol. 3. P. 377.

For the state of learning and morality in those days we have the following indubitable testimony. 'Among all the fathers of the fourth century, there was not in the opinion of Le Clerc, a worthier man than Gregory Nazianzen; and a part of the testi-

mony which he has left us of the spirit of his own times is as follows. He declares ' that the pulpits were filled with illiterate pastors, with mere boys, with imitators of the Scribes and Pharisees ; that there was no such thing as charity among them, but only acrimony and wrath ; that their religion consisted in condemning the irreligion of others, whose behaviour they watched, not to reform, but to defame them ; that they blamed or praised persons, not for their good or bad lives, but according to the party to which they belonged, admiring in one, what they reviled in another.'

' Gregory, of Nyssa, went to Jerusalem, to try whether he could pacify the quarrels there amongst the Christians. He tells us, that instead of finding the virtues which might have been expected from the inhabitants of the holy land, he found the place to be a sink of iniquity and debauchery, the seat of envy, malice, adultery, robbery, murder, idolatry, poisoning, and bloodshed, where men assassinated others for a trifling reward, so that in no place were murders so frequently, and so easily committed.' ' Such were the Christians of Jerusalem, in the fourth century, a century so abundant in saints and miracles.'—Jortin, V. 4. P. 69.

The enormities committed by both parties during the Donatist faction, which broke out in this, and prevailed through a great part of the next century, and which presents the first example of open war and bloodshed in support of the pretensions of a

Christian bishop, strongly display the unchristian spirit of the times. This quarrel, which involved the whole African church, did not arise from religious difference, but from the charge of turpitude, brought by the Donatists against those churches, which had given up their sacred books, under the Dioclesian persecution, and from their own claim to pre-eminence, on the score of superior sanctity. The Circumcelliones, a desperate band of ruffians, who, according to Mosheim, may be considered as the soldiers of the Donatists, supported their cause by assassinations and massacres, and filled the province of Africa with slaughter and rapine ; until Macarius, sent against them by Constantine, checked their career, and defeated them at the battle of Bagnia. The enormities of the Circumcelliones were indeed condemned by most of the Donatists, while the measures pursued against themselves were not reconcileable with the dictates of humanity or justice.

From the view which has been taken of this age, it need not excite surprise if the prophetic historian regard it in a different light from those who can see only prosperity in the church.

We must not, however, conclude that the character which has been drawn belonged to all without exception. Many individuals there were, no doubt, who had imbibed the true spirit of Christianity ; and the same period which allowed the nominal Christian to indulge without restraint, his worldly propensities, under the cloak of religion,

relieved also the real Christian from the dread of Pagan persecution; and allowed him for a time at least, to enjoy in peace the comforts of the gospel, the belief in which ceased from this time to be the watchword for cruelty and massacre.

The distinction between the nominal and the real Christian, just noticed, was too important to be disregarded in the prophetic history; where it accordingly has been marked with peculiar emphasis, by the former being designated as the followers of Antichrist, while the latter are distinguished as the 'true servants of God, having his mark on their foreheads:' they are moreover figuratively represented as already enjoying the peace and felicity which belong to the blessed in another life; while the followers of Antichrist, or the nominal Christian, is pictured as suffering already the perturbation and dismay, that await the wicked at the last day,

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#### FIFTH CENTURY.

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A. D. 400 to 500.—It was not long, as already intimated, that the true Christian was allowed to enjoy in tranquillity the comforts of his religion; for only a short period elapsed, before Pagan was succeeded by Antichristian or Sectarian persecution. The disturbances that broke out in the fourth century, from the contention of the worldly-minded, for power and promotion, were soon followed

by others, equally fatal to the peace of Christendom, and if possible still more injurious to the cause of true religion.

The subject of these was for the most part some metaphysical dispute about the nature of the God-head, as in the Arian and Trinitarian controversy ; which began in the fourth century, and in a short time gave rise to others, upon subjects equally beyond the reach of human research. The impossibility of producing uniformity of opinion on such questions, by persuasion or argument, necessarily became apparent in the different councils convened for this purpose ; and resort was consequently had to those means, which have never since wholly ceased to be employed, namely, compulsion and persecution.

Besides the Arian and Trinitarian, we find in the fifth century, the Nestorian, Eutychian, and Pelagian controversies ; with others of minor importance, which involved Christendom in strife and bloodshed. The mania for metaphysical disputation concerning the nature of the Deity, for two centuries infected the whole Christian world ; and this infatuation, which spread like a pestilence, was at last suppressed, rather than extinguished.

The real cause that kept alive these deplorable divisions, is stated by some of the most eminent writers of this period, to have been the same as that which occasioned the Donatist faction ; namely, the rivalry and jealousy of those prelates, who found their interest in fomenting this spirit of discord.

With these lamentable dissensions, which form a prominent feature in the history of the fourth century, is that of the fifth almost wholly engrossed.

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#### SIXTH CENTURY.

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**A. D. 500 to 612.**—If the Antichristian spirit thus manifestly betrayed itself, although cloaked under the garb of Christianity, it was not slow to display still more unequivocal marks of its Pagan origin. This appeared between the fifth and sixth century, by the revival of idolatry, in the worship of saints and images.

In the fifth century the Virgin Mary had obtained the title of Mother of God, and this was followed in the sixth by the establishment of the festivals of the Purification of the blessed Virgin, the Immaculate Conception, and others, ‘intended to console the Heathen converts, for the loss of their Lupercalia, or feasts of Pan.’

To the corruptions now stated, besides those before mentioned in the preceding century, which continued in full force, was added yet one which struck more decidedly at the root of Christianity than all the rest. This was the iniquitous practice of falsifying scripture; thus darkening, as it were, the very source of light. From the earliest periods, ignorance and credulity had led to the admission of doubtful or fictitious writings into the Christian

canon; and some even with the best intentions, were tempted to use the pious fraud, of publishing their own inventions, for writings of divine origin and authority; injudiciously thinking thereby to serve the cause of religion. But it was reserved for the period now under consideration, to establish the custom of systematically falsifying scripture for the worst of purposes, to answer selfish and worldly ends. In order to obtain the victory over an adversary in the religious controversies which were carried on at this time, and were for the most part decided in councils expressly convened, it became a prevailing practice to falsify texts in scripture, or to invent others to suit the purpose of the disputants. The extent to which this fraud was practised, may be conceived from the statement of Mosheim, that in the fifth century—‘the whole Christian church was overwhelmed with these spurious productions, these infamous impositions.’

The detection of these impostures, it must be remembered, was more difficult at that time, when there were only manuscript copies of scripture to refer to; these being comparatively few in number, carefully preserved by particular churches, and not in the hands of the people, as they have been since the art of printing was discovered. The clergy were the only depositaries of this sacred trust, and through them alone was the light of the gospel dispensed to their flock. How unworthy they were of this trust, at a time when they no longer desired to enlighten the minds of the people, but found their



interest in precluding from them the knowledge of truth, appears from the following statement. In the sixth century, 'the public teachers seemed to aim at nothing else than to sink the multitude into the most opprobrious ignorance and superstition, to efface from their minds all sense of the beauty and excellence of genuine piety, and to substitute in the place of religious principles, a blind veneration for the clergy, and a stupid zeal for a senseless round of ridiculous rites and ceremonies.'

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#### SEVENTH CENTURY.

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A. D. 612 to 762.—We have now reached an eventful period in the history of our religion, marked by two momentous occurrences, one, the establishment of the Papal hierarchy, and the other, the rise of Mahommedism. As these form the most prominent features in the picture of Antichristian domination, so they are distinguished in the prophetic history, by descriptions more minute and circumstantial than any others that occur. The latter, or the rise of Mahommedism, first claims our attention.

Six centuries had scarcely elapsed since the birth of the Messiah, and the first half of that period had already sufficed for the utter extinction of the true spirit of his religion; while the remaining half

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served to accomplish the complete re-establishment of the kingdom of Antichrist.

The revival of most of the Pagan superstitions, and the universal darkness and ignorance that prevailed at the commencement of the seventh century, favoured the attempt of one, who was either the most daring impostor, or the most extraordinary enthusiast that had yet appeared upon earth; this was Mahomet, the founder of the religion which bears his name, and of the Saracen empire, which in the short space of 150 years, extended itself over the greater part of Asia, and no inconsiderable portion of Europe and Africa.

A plausible pretext for the necessity of his pretended new revelation was furnished, by the universal corruption of religion that prevailed, the renewal of idolatry, and the profligacy of the clergy; while the state of blindness and ignorance in which they purposely kept the minds of the people, greatly served to facilitate the success of his imposture. After spending three years in gaining over a few proselytes, Mahomet at length openly declared himself as the prophet of God; sent for the purpose of abolishing idolatry, and restoring true religion. Miraculous powers he did not lay claim to, alleging that they had already proved ineffectual in the hands of his predecessors, Moses and Christ; sent into the world for the same purpose as himself, or to establish the worship of one God. But the obstinacy of mankind, in disregarding their precepts, had determined the Almighty, he said, to

punish their wickedness by sending himself, the last and greatest of the three, to propagate religion with the sword. Nor were there wanting texts in scripture, which he artfully applied to himself, as prophetic of his coming; but the proof of his divine mission, to which he chiefly appealed, was the success of his arms; while the joys of paradise were promised to those who fell in his cause. 'The sword,' said he, 'is the key of heaven and hell. A drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer. Whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven.' A doctrine so congenial to a warlike people, could not fail to convince; and in a short time united under his standard the scattered tribes of the Arabs, who acknowledged him for their leader and their prophet, and soon furnished the proofs he appealed to.

While he artfully strove to conciliate both Jews and Christians, by acknowledging Moses and Christ, he further shewed them indulgence, by tolerating their religion, on condition, however, of their submitting to his arms, and paying tribute; but so little regard was often shewn by the victors to this stipulation, and so great were the advantages that accrued from joining his standard, that multitudes of both were tempted to embrace this alternative, more it may be supposed from policy, than from conviction.

The progress of his newly established empire, did not end with the life of its founder, but conti-

nued after his death, with unparalleled success till the middle of the eighth century, or from the year 612, the date of the Mahommedan era, to the year 762, a space of 150 years; at which period the Saracen conquests extended from India to the Atlantic ocean, comprising Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain. In the year 762, the Caliph Almansor founded the city of Bagdad, on the Tigris, and called it the city of peace: from this time, as stated by Gibbon, the character of the Saracens began to change; war was no longer their passion, and they henceforward cultivated the arts of peace.

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#### EIGHTH TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

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A. D. 762 to 1453.—When the Mahommedans had firmly established both their religion and their empire, a temporising policy ceased to be necessary; and in their subsequent irruptions, they no longer shewed the same indulgence as formerly to the Christians, but compelled them to renounce their religion, or treated them with the most merciless barbarity. The extent to which Christianity once prevailed in regions, where it is now almost unknown, may be conceived from the statement of Sir I. Newton, (*Obs. on Dan. P. 298*) that there were, as early as the 5th century, no less than 700 bishoprics in Africa alone. And before the 7th century, as we learn from Mosheim, it was not only estab-

lished in Syria, Arabia, and Persia, but had gained a footing in Tartary, Hindostan, and China. Over all this vast tract of country, scarce a vestige of it now remains, so effectually has it been eradicated by Mahommedism.

The change of character in the Mahommedan invaders, and their different treatment of the Christians, is first mentioned by Mosheim, in the middle of the 8th century; where he describes the Turks, as more fierce and inhuman than the Saracens; and the same difference is again noticed in the 11th century. During the intervening period, the struggles between the Turks and Saracens appear to have afforded a respite to the Christians from their incursions; but by this time the Saracen empire in the East having fallen before the victorious arms of the Turks, these latter seized upon the richest provinces of the Greek empire, and treated the Christians with the utmost cruelty. In the mean time, the Saracens in Spain are stated to have persevered in the means they formerly employed, of seduction and allurements, in tempting them to apostatise; a difference in the conduct of these invaders, not overlooked in the prophecy. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the progress of the Turks was checked, partly perhaps by the crusades; while the affairs of the Christians in the East appear under a somewhat more favorable aspect, for the Tartars and Moguls, who at this time overran the continent of Asia, shewed no great aversion to Christianity, which was embraced by some of their

princes. Even Gengis Khan, though he did not favor the Christians, did not extinguish the light of the gospel in the countries he invaded. But in the 14th century, the Tartars renounced the peaceful religion of Jesus, and embraced that of the Koran, which was more congenial to their warlike habits; and towards the close of this century, the victorious arms of Tamerlane were effectually employed in eradicating all remains of it, and substituting Mahommedism over the greatest part of Asia. At length, in the middle of the 15th century, the Greek empire was finally overthrown by Mahomet the 2d. and from the year 1453, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks, is to be dated, the utter extinction of the light of the gospel in this quarter of the globe.

Thus between the 8th and the 15th century, among the different periods of Mahommedan invasion, we find four, which appear to have been particularly fatal to Christianity; and on this account, as well as from their occurring under four different dynasties, they are aptly symbolised by the loosing of four angels, or messengers sent by Heaven, as expressly declared in the prophecy, for a judgment upon the world.

We may at the same time observe, how little importance is attached in the spiritual history, to events of whatever magnitude, which have only a political influence; when so cursory a view is taken of these irruptions of the Turks and Tartars between the 8th and 15th century, although they swept

over the vast continent of Asia from one extremity to the other ; overthrowing empires which had stood for ages, and changing not only the government, but in most instances the religion also of the nations subdued ; substituting however another, as little calculated to ameliorate the condition, or enlighten the minds of the human race.

The same observations appear equally applicable to the crusades, which took place about this period ; and accordingly these events, if noticed at all, are at most only glanced at in the prophetic history. Between the 11th and 13th century, the inundation of immense armies of crusaders carried the tide of war with an almost equal wave in an opposite direction to that of the Tartar hordes, or from west to east. Commenced in an age of darkness and superstition, from a mistaken sense of that religion, which breathes nothing but charity and peace, these fanatical expeditions spread devastation and ruin over all Christendom ; being far more fatal to those who embarked in them, than to those against whom they were directed. Eventually unsuccessful even as to the object for which they were undertaken, namely, the delivery of the holy land from the hands of the Turks ; it is questionable whether they were productive of any one benefit, to counterbalance the incalculable evils to which they certainly gave rise. Not to dwell upon the temporal calamities that flowed from them, in the myriads of lives that were sacrificed, and the immense wealth squandered away ; not to mention

the atrocities committed with impunity by these self-styled soldiers of Christ ; they were attended with moral evils of a more permanent nature, which entitle them perhaps to some notice in a spiritual history. Among these must be enumerated the increased growth of superstition, which was nourished by the abundance of fictitious relics brought from Palestine, and the consequent multiplication of imaginary saints ; to which must be added the aggrandisement of the Papal See, already become inordinate, which in various ways found its interest promoted by these undertakings, and used therefore every means to keep the spirit of them alive ; besides these, was the ingrafting of the military mania upon religious enthusiasm, and their conjunction in the establishment of new orders, which embraced both professions ; also the introduction of this martial spirit into judicial proceedings, as in the trial by combat, at that time revived and substituted for other impious modes of appealing to Heaven, which was expected at the call of man, to afford miraculous interposition ; and perhaps also deserves to be noticed, among the consequences of these expeditions, the first introduction into modern Europe of theatrical exhibitions, in the form of sacred dramas, called the Mysteries ; a species of scenical representation, still kept up in some Catholic countries, although of a nature every way calculated to degrade in the mind of the spectator the feeling of reverence for the religion he professes.



If the crusades be at all alluded to in the prophecy, it is most probably, in what was uttered by the voices of the seven thunders. But the import of this, the prophet was commanded to seal up, and the mention of the seven thunders serves only to give intimation that some events of magnitude are here omitted in the chronological series. The period of this omission, as well as the number seven, naturally directs the attention to the crusades, which have accordingly been supposed by some commentators, to be here adverted to.

In answer to this, it has on the other hand been denied, that the number of the crusades was really seven. This objection, however, appears to have little foundation; for two, which are probably taken into account by the objector, cannot fairly be included; one of which abandoned the original object of the expedition for the conquest of Constantinople; and the other under Louis the 9th, never reached Palestine, but perished miserably on the coast of Africa; thus, as if by Divine ordination, limiting the number to seven, while it put an end to the rage for crusading.

With this subject, which indeed properly belongs to the history of Christianity in the west, but would not be so conveniently introduced there, we now close the narrative of its progress and extinction in the east; and next proceed, according to the plan of the prophetic writer, with the other branch of the subject.

# *History of Christianity,*

## IN THE WEST.

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### FIRST TO THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

**A. D. 32 to 606.**—The taking of Constantinople by the Turks, having brought to a close the history of Christianity in the east, its progress in the west comes next into view; and in order to present this in a more connected form, we shall, after the plan of the prophetic history, briefly revert to the events of the earlier ages.

During the three first centuries, it was no where the predominant religion, but enjoyed only a precarious existence, amidst the constant efforts of its enemies to extinguish its divine light. At length, after a struggle of three hundred years, this conflict between Paganism and Christianity terminated, as we have seen, in the triumph of the latter and its establishment as the religion of the empire, by the conversion of Constantine. By this event, typically represented as the end of the labour pains and the figurative birth of the man-child, was a new era opened to the Christians; who were thus relieved from the dread of their oppressors, and allowed to enjoy the exercise of their religion in peace and security.

This happy interval was however but of short du-

ration, for Pagan was quickly succeeded by Antichristian persecution; and the same tyranny, which had so lately appeared cruel and unjust, when themselves were the objects of it, the self-styled Christians began to practice against others from the very instant that they acquired power to do so. Nor were their former enemies and oppressors, the Jews and the Pagans, the only objects of this persecution; for the rivalry and jealousy awakened by the prospect of wealth and worldly honors, soon gave occasion to animosities, in the nominally Christian church, which were more rancorous, and more fatal to true religion, than the utmost severity of Pagan cruelty. Sectarian disagreement was the watchword for this Antichristian warfare; but the historian of the times has not left us to conjecture as to its real causes, which were no other than worldly ambition, and personal jealousy between the rival candidates for ecclesiastical preferment.

Considering the motives by which multitudes were at this period induced nominally to embrace the religion of Jesus, and the means by which Constantine endeavoured to effect the conversion of the Pagans, it may reasonably be questioned whether they really added one sincere convert to the true church of Christ. While, on the other hand, it is certain that the shoals of Pagans who flowed in at this time, from the fear of punishment or the hope of gain, brought with them into the bosom of the church, a multitude of superstitions, which in a

short time caused Christianity to approximate to Paganism in its outward form, as much as it had already imbibed of the spirit of heathenism.

In the course of the next three centuries, that followed the age of Constantine, those changes took place which are almost unanimously considered by protestant commentators on the Apocalypse, as denoting the full establishment of the dominion of Antichrist. Certain it is that the simple forms of Christian worship were gradually supplanted by the gaudy rites of Paganism. Festivals were industriously multiplied, and those honors were paid to the saints, which had before been given to the Gods. In the place of the Goddess Vesta, divine honors were paid to the virgin Mary, who was designated by the title, Mother of God. Images of Christ, and paintings of imaginary saints, supplied the place of marble statues; and this outward form of idolatry, though at first vehemently opposed by some, was at last triumphantly established in the western church.

It would not however be just to lay to the charge of the Latin or western church, the corruptions of this period, most of which were prevalent in the east, earlier than in the west; but it may with truth be affirmed of both, that the state of ignorance in which the people were purposely kept by the priesthood, and the examples of profligacy and worldly-mindedness set before them, contributed no less to promote the Papal usurpation in the one, than they did to favour the imposture of Mahomet in the other.

**SEVENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.**

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**A. D. 606 to 1500.**—At the beginning of the seventh century, exactly coeval in their establishment, as they were destined to be also in their duration and downfall, were these two open manifestations of Antichristian dominion. For at the same time that the false prophet began to propagate his religion, and to found his empire with the sword, did the bishop of Rome obtain from the emperor Phocas, the acknowledgment of his supremacy, as head of the universal church. The object of both Papacy and Mahommedism was the same, or worldly power, but in outward form and appearance, they were widely different; the one a military despotism; openly avowing the employment of force, the other a spiritual tyranny, no less aspiring and cruel in reality, but gaining its ends under the garb of meekness and humility; as strikingly characterised in the prophecy, by a beast ‘having two horns as a lamb, but speaking like a dragon;’ and also portrayed as a harlot, drunk with the blood of the saints.

The subject of the prophetic history is the spiritual, and not the political state of the world; but it was necessary to indicate the place where, and to fix the time when, the power of Antichrist should be thus openly developed. Accordingly the seat of his dominion was distinctly marked as the Ro-

man empire, by the symbol of a beast with seven heads and ten horns; the heads being expressly declared to be typical of its seven successive forms of government, and the horns to signify ten kingdoms, into which the empire, at the time of the prophecy entire and unbroken, was destined to be subsequently divided. While the time when this power should arise, was determined by this, amongst other circumstances, that it was to be subsequent to the division foretold in this remarkable prophecy. The predicted overthrow of the western empire took place at the close of the fifth century; but the barbarian nations who effected this subversion, unlike the Moslem conquerors of the east, instead of imposing their religion on the vanquished, in a short time embraced that of the people they had subdued.

If our astonishment be excited by the fulfilment of this prophecy, respecting the division of the empire into ten separate kingdoms; (and such is precisely the number fixed even by profane historians, as Procopius and Machiavelli); surely the prediction which follows is equally calculated to amaze us. It was next foretold that these ten kings should agree to give their power to another beast, whose future empire was to be different from any that had hitherto prevailed; this is designated by marks too striking to be mistaken, which clearly point out the Papal hierarchy. The distinguishing features of this spiritual tyranny, as displayed under the types of the two horned beast and the harlot of Babylon, are, its blasphemous assumption of titles, that belong

to Omnipotence alone ; its pretence to infallibility, and miraculous powers ; to the right of forgiving sins, both in this world and the next ; in short, of dispensing eternal happiness or misery, thus arrogating the exclusive privilege of the Almighty ; its claiming supremacy over all the princes of the earth ; and persecuting, with relentless cruelty, all who dared to question these pretensions. Amongst other peculiarities intimated in the prophetic description, is the abominable sale of indulgencies, denounced as a ' traffic in men's souls.' In short the accurate delineation given in the prophecy, anticipates the task of the historian ; presenting a picture, which was recognised in the very infancy of the Papal power, and became a salutary warning to thousands, who withdrew from the pale of the Romish church ; while at a later period the same warning voice is allowed to have been chiefly instrumental in bringing about the reformation.

The accuracy of the picture thus presented by the prophetic historian, six centuries before the events took place, under the two symbols, of the harlot and the beast, requires no alteration, and scarcely leaves room for addition, except in the way of illustration or comment. Considering the ignorance and depravity of the clergy in these dark ages, few of whom could either read or write, and among whom little else was to be seen but spiritual ambition, insatiable avarice, pious fraud, intolerable pride, with many other vices, one cannot but wonder at the blind veneration paid to them by the

people ; nor does there appear any other solution than the one given by Mosheim, and acquiesced in by Dr. Jortin, (V. 4. P. 441), namely, the habitual reverence for the druidical priesthood, that the Pagan converts brought with them into the church ; which led them to transfer to the Roman Pontiff the superstitious awe with which they had been taught to regard their chief druid ; a feeling cordially welcomed, and carefully cherished by the See of Rome.

Of the two orders who composed the clergy, the monks were the more zealous, and the more efficient, in furthering the views of the Pontiff. The belief in their superior sanctity, founded on their Pharisaical affectation of uncommon piety and devotion, along with their frequent intercourse with the people, gave them this influence over the credulous multitude ; while the protection afforded them by the Pope, against the jealousy of the rival orders, inclined them to employ it in his service. The numbers of the monastic orders increased to such an extent, that in the sixth century we are told, whole armies might have been raised out of them, without any sensible diminution of that enormous body. The veneration for these orders, which was unbounded and universal, became also a source of immense wealth to the Romish See ; for their prayers being esteemed most effectual in propitiating the Deity, were purchased by liberal donations ; while fertile lands, and large patrimonies, were often bestowed by those who devoted their children to the monastic life.



Among the monastic orders, none were held in higher estimation than the mendicants, who are represented at a later period as the main pillar of the hierarchy. As a specimen of the frauds practised by them, and the blind veneration paid to these friars, may be mentioned the story of Simon Stockius, general of the order of Carmelites, in the thirteenth century. To this ecclesiastic, it was asserted and believed, that the virgin Mary had appeared, and given a solemn promise, that all who died with the Carmelite cloak or scapular upon their shoulders, should be infallibly preserved from eternal damnation; and strange as it may appear, a fiction so impious and absurd, found patrons even among the pontiffs.

Another source of emolument arose out of the reliance placed on the intercession of the saints, and the efficacy of their relics, which were supposed to protect the possessor from all manner of evil. Not only every church, but every individual had a patron saint; and the fertile invention of the clergy, speedily increased their numbers, in proportion to the demand. The fabulous histories of the lives of these imaginary saints, purchased with avidity, formed the chief study of the people, and superceded the perusal of the scriptures; while the discovery of their relics, which was invariably ascribed to a celestial vision, or divine revelation to some favoured ecclesiastic, afforded an extensive and profitable article of traffic with the deluded multitude.

But these pious frauds appear venial, when com-

pared with the infamous method afterwards adopted, to satisfy the avarice of the See of Rome. This was the abominable sale of indulgencies, whereby the payment of certain sums could purchase impunity for crimes, either past or future; and the ground on which the pretence to this absolving power was founded, displays at once the ignorance of the people, and the unprincipled cupidity of the pontiffs. It was maintained that the meritorious works of the saints, being more than sufficient for their own salvation, left an immense fund for the benefit of others, at the disposal of the church. It was further asserted, that 'one drop of Christ's blood, being more than sufficient to redeem the whole human race, the remaining quantity that was shed in the garden and on the cross, was left as a legacy to the church, to be a treasure, whence indulgencies were to be drawn, and administered by the Roman pontiff.'

It was this scandalous pretence on the part of Leo the 10th, and his demanding from Luther the acknowledgment of his power, to deliver from all the punishments due to sin and transgression, that brought about the reformation in the 16th century. But long before this the ambition of the pontiffs had claimed supremacy over all the kings of the earth. In the 13th century we learn, that Innocent the 3d. claimed the empire of the world, and disposed of crowns and sceptres according to his pleasure. In Asia he gave a king to the Armenians; in Europe he conferred the regal dignity on Primislaus, duke

of Bohemia ; by his legate, was Johannicius, duke of Bulgaria and Wallachia, invested with the ensigns and honors of royalty ; while he crowned with his own hand Peter the 2d. of Arragon, who had rendered his dominions subject and tributary to the church. When the empire was disputed between Philip, duke of Suabia, and Otho the 4th, he embraced the cause of Otho, thundered out his anathemas against Philip, and upon his death placed the crown on the head of his adversary. But Otho, not chusing to submit to his authority, was in his turn excommunicated, and Frederic the 2d. raised to the throne in his place. The same pontiff compelled Philip Augustus of France, to take back the queen whom he had divorced ; and obliged John of England to acknowledge himself his vassal. Such was the arrogance of the avowed representative of the meek and humble Jesus.

When we consider the character which Christianity had assumed, from the time of its accession to the imperial throne, little surprise will be excited by the means employed for its propagation among the nations of Europe. The open avowal of the use of the sword in disseminating their faith, is urged as an eternal reproach against the followers of Mahomet. With what reason this charge is brought against them by the self-styled Christians, will be seen from a cursory view of the means employed by themselves. If we look back to the 8th century, when most of the northern nations were still enveloped in the darkness of the pagan super-

stitutions, we shall find Christianity making little progress by any other means than force; and the conversion of the Saxon nations appears to have been chiefly owing to the victorious arms of the Franks, under Charlemagne. In the 9th century indeed, some little success seems to have attended the efforts of missionaries, who employed better means, among the Bulgarians, and Bohemians; and the same may be said of the first dawning of the light of the gospel among the Russians in this century; but such instances are of rare occurrence. In the 10th century, the conversion of Rollo and his Normans, was purchased by Charles the Simple, at the expence of part of his territory, and the hand of his daughter Gisela. By threats and promises, edicts and penal laws, Micislaus conquered the obstinacy of the Poles; while similar means succeeded in persuading the Hungarians, to follow the example of Stephen their prince. Harald and the Danes in the same century, received the faith, less through choice than compulsion, from their victorious enemy, Otho the Great; while the Norwegians in like manner, abandoned the gods of their ancestors, compelled by the victorious arms of the Swedes. At the end of this century, Adalbert, bishop of Prague, endeavoured to instil the truths of the gospel into the minds of the Prussians, then a fierce and savage race; but he perished in the attempt, and received, from the lance of Siggo, a pagan priest, the crown of martyrdom. His death was avenged by Boleslaus, king of Poland, and the

Prussians in the 11th century, after a bloody war, were dragooned into the Christian church. In the 12th century, the Finlanders were compelled to receive the faith ; and among the Livonians, the propagation of the gospel was attended with horrible scenes of bloodshed and cruelty. The chief instruments in this achievement were the military order of knights sword-bearers, instituted by Innocent the 3d. to preach the gospel sword in hand, and prove its truth by blows instead of arguments. New legions were however required from Germany, to second the efforts of these booted apostles ; until by slaughter and violence, the spirit of this wretched people was finally subdued.

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#### SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

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A. D. 1500 to 1600.—We have seen by what means the dominion of the pope was extended over the northern nations, and with what reason the Mahomedans are upbraided with the use of force, in propagating their faith. Before the end of the 12th century, ten kings, according to the prophecy, had given their power to the beast, and continued to do so till the middle of the 16th, the period of the reformation ; these were France, Spain, Portugal, England, Scotland, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, and Hungary. Of these, some threw off the papal yoke entirely, at the time of the reformation ; as England, Scotland, and Sweden ; others

did so partially, as some states only of Germany; while the example was soon followed by Denmark; and numbers in France, Poland, and Hungary, embraced the reformed religion. At the same time in Spain, Portugal, and even in Italy, the very throne of papacy, demonstrations were not wanting of a disposition to revolt from this spiritual tyranny; but here the terrors of the inquisition succeeded in checking the progress of reform, and terrified the people back into popery. From this time however, the power of the popes was greatly restricted, and the majesty of the Romish church lost much of its former splendour; and although they did not altogether expire at this time, yet was the death-blow given to papal supremacy.

This memorable event took place in the year 1555, in which the protestants secured to themselves the free enjoyment of their religion, by the peace of Augsburg.

The prophetic duration of Antichristian tyranny is stated to be 1260 years; a period which evidently admits of two modes of computation; one from the beginning of its rise, to the beginning of its downfall; and the other from its complete establishment, to its entire demolition. The beginning of its rise must clearly be dated from the accession of Christianity to the imperial throne, by the conversion of Constantine; when its professors, to use the words of Archdeacon Woodhouse, 'instead of washing their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, assumed the hue of another leader, the fire-colour-

ed dragon.' This was in the year 312, to which must be added 1260; but the prophetic year consists of twelve months, of thirty days each, or 360 days; consequently 1260 of such years will be only 1243 solar years, and these added to 312, make precisely 1555, the year in which papal supremacy received its death-blow.

The other mode of computation must begin from the year 606, making a difference of three centuries; for, like the figurative birth of the Man-child, so the birth and the death, the rise and the fall of Antichrist, appear to have each engrossed the same period. But his last convulsive struggle being not yet over, we may leave it to the event to mark the precise date of its termination.

The immediate cause of the reformation was the infamous sale of indulgencies, the iniquity of which was successfully exposed by Luther, Calvin, Zuingli, and others; but the benefits of this revolution were not confined to the abolition of such abuses, and the exposure of the pious frauds practised by the clergy; a still more essential service, rendered to the cause of true religion, was the revival of the use of the scriptures, and their dissemination among the people; from whom they had long been withheld, or communicated only in a garbled and imperfect manner, and disfigured with writings of doubtful authority. This state in which the testimony of truth had long been held, appears to be prophetically and aptly expressed by 'the witnesses prophecying in sackcloth,' the garb of mourning.

This garb was at length thrown off when the scriptures were translated by Luther into the vulgar tongue, and freely disseminated among the people; to whom this blessing was thenceforward secured by the art of printing, then recently discovered: this occurred in 1521 or 22.

While the reformation was attended with the happiest effects to those who escaped from papal thralldom, it was necessarily productive of an aggravation of their sufferings, to those who continued in subjection to this spiritual tyranny. Stripped of a large portion of its grandeur, limited in the extent of its power, and despoiled of much of its wealth, the Romish church had no means of securing what remained to it, but by riveting more closely the chains of those, still held in subjection, who might betray any signs of impatience under its sway. For this purpose, as before stated, the terrors of the inquisition were successfully employed in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, to check the further progress of revolt; but the same measures, resorted to in the Belgic provinces, were followed by a different result, and caused them, after a long and bloody war, to throw off at once the papal yoke, and their allegiance to Spain.

Other means were however not neglected by the See of Rome, to support its declining influence. The mendicant orders, who had hitherto been the main pillar of the hierarchy, having lost their credit, and fallen into disrepute, were replaced by others, amongst which the Jesuits held by far the



most conspicuous place. This order, different from any before instituted, was released from the usual restraints of the monastic life, that more leisure might be left to its members, actively to engage in the affairs of the world; where, by insinuating themselves into the confidence of the princes and rulers, they might influence their measures, and thus render essential service to the cause of the church.

The wisdom of such a measure soon became apparent; for this zealous order in a short time acquired more extensive influence than all the others, and was thereby enabled more effectually to serve the cause of popery. From their unrivalled skill in all the arts and sciences, they were generally entrusted with the education of youth; while the suavity of their manners, and their consummate prudence in civil transactions, obtained for them the favour of the great, and the protection of crowned heads. 'Nor did any thing contribute more to give them a general ascendancy, than the cunning and dexterity with which they relaxed and modified their system of morality; accommodating it artfully to the propensities of mankind, and depriving it on certain occasions, of the severity that rendered it burdensome to the sensual and voluptuous.' While we are constrained to admire the zeal and ability with which these faithful servants discharged their duty towards the church, we must at the same time maintain that it frequently was at the expence of true religion and morality. And considering the authority they exercised in the education of youth,

there is reason to conclude, that in the hands of such teachers, the pure doctrines of the gospel could not fail to be polluted at their very source, and the foundations of morality to be undermined. This cause alone may not be esteemed adequate to account for the alarming growth of infidelity, which forms a leading feature in the history of this and the succeeding century, but there can be no doubt that it contributed largely towards it; for it is perfectly manifest that among those of the rising generation, whose education was intrusted to the Jesuits, and whose faith was not yet firmly established, any religious doubts, that might arise, would be greatly strengthened by observing the laxity of the moral system inculcated; and the casuistry with which the doctrines of scripture were accommodated to the occasion. This would not fail to prepare their minds for the reception of that false philosophy, which spread so rapidly in the 17th century; and which amongst the calamitous effects it produced in the 18th, presented the frightful spectacle, of a whole nation renouncing their God, denying the existence of a future state, and proclaiming death an eternal sleep.

To account for the portentous growth of irreligion and immorality, along with the hatred towards the priesthood, that arose from the time of the reformation, we have another and a more efficient cause, than the casuistry of the Jesuits, in the detection and full exposure of the frauds and iniquities of the sacred orders; the knowledge of which

Was industriously and extensively disseminated, not by the reformers only, but by thousands within the pale of the Romish church, who became tainted with the new philosophy. The French revolution, with all its horrors, may by the priesthood be ascribed to the spirit of irreligion, and hostility to the church that prevailed; but the philosophic inquirer will look farther, and ask whence those feelings arose; and to this question only one answer can be given. When religion is manifestly perverted into an engine of state policy, as it was by most crowned heads in Europe, and above all by the head of the church; when the appearance of sanctity is put on merely as a cloak, to conceal the most enormous vices, as it long had been by the clergy, and especially by the monks; the perpetuation of such a system can only be insured by keeping the people hood-winked, and precluding them from the smallest ray of light. Of this truth the Romish church appear to have been well aware, from the jealous eye with which they watched the progress of science, and the care with which they kept even the scriptures from the eyes of the people. But in spite of their efforts, the spirit of inquiry had awakened with the revival of learning, while the invention of printing facilitated its advancement; at the same time that the ruin of the Greek empire in the east, and the dispersion of its literary exiles, introduced into the west a better acquaintance both with the language and writings of the antients.

Thus the public mind began to awaken from its

slumber; and can it be wondered at, when their eyes were opened to such scenes of iniquity, if superficial observers, seeing little else besides fraud and hypocrisy in an order which they had been accustomed to esteem holy, should rashly conclude that religion was altogether a system of priestcraft and delusion, invented for the purpose of enriching the church, and keeping the people in quiet subjection to their rulers?

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#### SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

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A. D. 1600 to 1700.—We have seen the means employed by the Romish church, to sustain its influence and authority, which were now manifestly on the wane; nor were these means ineffectual, at least in renewing the conflict with those who sought to shake off its spiritual tyranny.

Early in the sixteenth century, the flames of a religious war broke out in Austria, where the friends of the reformation were cruelly persecuted and oppressed by their Roman Catholic adversaries. The Bohemians, who became involved in it, were compelled, after the loss of the battle of Prague, in the year 1620, once more to bend their necks under the yoke of Rome. In this war, which raged in Germany with unrelenting animosity, for thirty years together, the protestants suffered every species of oppression; until at length the cause of

the reformation was again triumphant, and religious liberty was secured in the year 1648, by the peace of Westphalia.

From this time the Romish church no longer opposed the protestants by open war ; but wherever the spirit of persecution could be exerted with impunity, there they oppressed them in the most grievous manner. Thus in Hungary, during the space of ten years, the reformers were involved in the most cruel calamities and vexations. In Poland they suffered no less, during the whole of this century. And in the valleys of Piedmont, the Waldenses were persecuted almost to extermination, especially in the years 1655, 1686, and 1696. In France the cause of the reformation was doomed to suffer the most fatal blow in the year 1685 ; for the weak and credulous mind of Louis the 14th. was induced at the instigation of the Jesuits, to revoke the edict of Nantes, in violation of the most solemn obligations ; and thus deprived the protestants of the liberty of worshipping God according to their conscience. In Germany, the church of the Palatinate, which had long been at the head of the reformed, visibly declined from the year 1685, when a catholic prince was raised to that electorate ; and from being the first, it at length became the least considerable of all the protestant assemblies in that country. But in England the efforts of the Romish church were effectually frustrated, and James the 2d. lost his crown from his attachment to the papal cause.

Thus we see that the cause of popery was at least partially triumphant, towards the close of this century ; but in the next, the reign of bigotry and superstition was doomed to encounter enemies yet more formidable than those who brought about the reformation. These were the spirit of infidelity, and that of hatred to the church ; which from their rise in the latter half of the 16th century, had been continually increasing in the 17th, and reached their summit during the 18th.

The causes that most probably gave birth to these feelings, have already been traced up to the exposure of the frauds and impositions practised by the sacred orders, and fully exposed at the time of the reformation ; while the conduct of the Jesuits was stated to have contributed not a little to their production, by undermining the foundations of religion and morality.

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#### EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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A. D. 1700 to 1800.—Whatever the cause to which they are ascribed, there can be no doubt that hatred to the church, and the prevalence of infidelity, were chiefly instrumental in bringing about a revolution, which has no parallel in the history of mankind ; a revolution, which not only struck at the root of the Romish church, but for a time seemed to threaten with destruction every other form of religion, and to aim at nothing less than to loosen

all the bonds of social order, and involve the moral world in one wide chaos of confusion. The recency of this event renders any detail superfluous. After Europe has been deluged with blood for twenty years together, we have witnessed the suspension at least of these calamities; though we can hardly expect that it will prove to be their termination. When we cast a glance at those countries where, as in Spain and Portugal, superstition still holds her sway over one class; and observe moreover the prevalence of infidelity in another; we can scarcely persuade ourselves that the conflict between irreligion and fanaticism has finally ceased. On the contrary, the attentive observer will find sufficient reason to believe, that the present interval is no more than a pause between the contending parties, to take breath, and gather fresh vigour, for the renewal of the combat,

As far as regards ourselves, we have indeed the consolation to observe, that the evils of this contest have been hitherto almost exclusively confined to those countries where the Romish religion prevails, as France, Spain, Italy, and Austria; and although we may not be wholly exempt from the influence of those causes which have given rise to it, yet is there reason to hope that they will never reach the dangerous height in this country which they have elsewhere attained.

Among the horrors of the late revolution, none was more conspicuous than the marked hostility to the church. Not only were its revenues seized,

and its authority subverted, but even the lives of the clergy were sought after with peculiar avidity, and sacrificed with rancorous malignity ; such was, as foretold in the prophecy, the hatred of the harlot, by those who had lately been her admirers and paramours.

It is true that the priesthood have since been partly reinstated in their rights, and all their worldly possessions may be restored to them ; but the spiritual influence, especially of the monastic orders is gone, and can never be recalled, in those countries where their frauds and iniquities have been fully exposed. Thus we have seen the death-blow given to that branch of the Romish clergy, which has been emphatically styled, the soul of the papal hierarchy.

While the hand of Providence thus appears to be preparing the last blow, which is to complete the extinction of the empire of Antichrist in the west ; the same overruling power seems to be not less visibly preparing for the approaching fulfilment of the prophecy, by the overthrow of his empire in the east. Mahommedism and papacy, which may be called the two horns of Antichrist, were coeval, as we have seen, in their rise, and were destined to be so in their duration and downfall. Accordingly the ' drying up of the Euphrates ' is likely to receive its speedy accomplishment in the decline of the Ottoman empire. It appears moreover to be receiving its fulfilment in the precise way expressed in the prophecy by ' the drying up of the river,'



that is, wasting away by the slow process of internal disease; or according to the corresponding prediction of Daniel, who expresses the same idea, in a different and still less figurative manner, it seems likely to be 'broken without hand.' (See Clarke on the Dragon and the Beast). For if this revolution be brought about by the revolt of the Greeks, it will be a natural dissolution; the Janissaries, who have hitherto formed the chief strength of the Turkish armies, being composed of Christian children, forcibly taken from their parents, instructed in the use of arms, and educated in the principles of the Moslem faith. The emancipation of the Greeks will therefore be a revolution from within, and not a subversion of this empire from without; and the success of their revolt will be conclusive proof of the decay and weakness of the Turkish power, which was at one time able to cope with, and subvert the Saracen empire.

The spiritual consequence to be looked for from the downfall of this power, can hardly fail to be what the prophecy announces; namely, that it will open the way to the conversion of the Asiatic nations to Christianity, or as it is expressed, 'make way for the kings of the east;' a phrase which appears to be applicable to the eastern nations, as that of 'the ten kings' is to the western, who gave their power to the beast.

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**Having thus given a brief sketch of the spiritual history, to which the prophecy relates, we have next to inquire into the language in which it is written,**

**A**  
**VOCABULARY**  
**OF THE**  
**SYMBOLICAL LANGUAGE,**  
**WITH**  
**SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY**  
**FOR ITS INTERPRETATION.**



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VOCABULARY  
OF THE  
*Symbolical Language.*

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KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

**THERE** is one point on which commentators on the Apocalypse seem to be almost universally agreed; and that is, that the progress of Christianity is the subject of this prophecy. The phrases *kingdom of Heaven* and *kingdom of God*, when used in the prophetical sense, are now generally allowed to have this signification; or to mean, the Christian dispensation on earth.

This kingdom is moreover understood to be a spiritual kingdom, consisting in the reign of true religion in the heart of man. 7

Yet, notwithstanding the admission of these points by commentators in general, the proportion of political matter introduced into their exposition, will be found greatly to preponderate over that which is spiritual. To be convinced of this, the reader need only glance his eye over the subject of a few chapters, as stated in the table of contents, to Mr. Gauntlett's late work. He will there find the first Seal, it is true, interpreted spiritually, as foretelling the glorious success of the gospel in the apostolic age; but the spiritual view is then relinquished, and gives place to the political. The second Seal is supposed to foretel destructive wars; J

the third, calamity, affliction, and mourning ; the fourth, great mortality : and so also with the Trumpets ; the first, foretelling the invasion of Italy by the Goths ; the second, the ravages committed by the Huns ; the third, those by the Vandals and Moors ; and the fourth, the subversion of the Western empire. (See note N in the Appendix).

Very plausible reasons, it is admitted, are alleged for this introduction of political events; as for instance, that the Christians were greatly, if not principally concerned in these transactions ; which, therefore, form an essential feature in the history of Christendom. But to this, the answer is, that the subject of the prophecy is not the history of Christendom, but the history of Christianity ; a distinction, which, by the preceding outline of that history, will, it is hoped, be rendered sufficiently apparent ; one, presenting an account of the political events which befel the Christians, while the other relates the progress of pure religion in the heart of man ; such being the true nature of the kingdom of the Messiah, and the subject of the prophecy before us.

The phrase *kingdom of Heaven* may, by some, be supposed to allude to a future state ; but this is confounding its symbolical with its literal acceptance ; and would be no less preposterous than to suppose the Horses or any other symbol in the vision to have no farther signification than that expressed by the thing literally represented. The one has here its symbolical meaning as well as the other.



The nature of the Messiah's kingdom, and the meaning of the phrase *kingdom of Heaven*, are well explained by Dr. Sykes, as cited by Dr. Towers, in a work printed about thirty years ago, but not published, entitled, *Illustrations of Prophecy*. He shews that they 'signify the dispensation of the gospel, as preached and practised upon earth, and not a state of future existence, nor were ever thought to do so by the disciples of our Lord. To a Jew, indeed, these phrases were familiar. Thus Bishop Kidder assures us, that the Chaldee paraphrast, like the writers of the New Testament, sometimes denominated the kingdom of the Messiah, *the kingdom of God*. Accordingly, says Dr. Sykes, the Jews were so well acquainted with the meaning of this expression, and were so well apprised of a kingdom which God hath resolved in his due time to set up, that as often as Jesus talked of the *kingdom of Heaven*, or, *of God*, neither the people nor their rulers ever offered to ask him the meaning of that phrase.'

It is true, however, that although the Jews rightly understood these phrases, as alluding to the Messiah on earth; yet did they wholly misconceive the nature of his reign, looking for a political, and not a spiritual kingdom; a prince, who was to govern by the arm of power, and not by spiritual influence in the heart of man. Another expression used by our Lord, and which fully explains the former, '*the kingdom of God is within you*,' was either disregarded or misunderstood by them. But

if this blindness in the Jews appear strange to us; it is surely more singular that we ourselves, who perceive and deplore that prejudice, which prevented them from understanding the prophecies concerning our Saviour; and his kingdom, by causing them to look for a political, and not a spiritual prince; should ourselves be led astray from the true sense of the prophetic history of his kingdom, by attachment to the political, instead of the spiritual interpretation.

The explanation given above, of the phrase kingdom of heaven, as signifying Christianity on earth; it would be easy to confirm, by the authority of the most respectable scriptural critics; but the general admission of its correctness, renders it superfluous to enlarge upon this point. The question that demands attention here; is not whether such be the meaning of the phrase, but whether commentators on the Apocalypse be justified in relinquishing this explanation; as often as it suits their convenience, and in substituting another, whenever it accords better with their views of the prophecy. That this latitude is what they have allowed themselves, and that, not casually or incidentally, but constantly and universally, will appear by reference to the writings of every commentator, from Mede to Mr. Gauntlett; with the single exception of Archdeacon Woodhouse. The following instances will best explain this twofold acceptance of the symbols.

The spiritual meaning of these symbols is not denied, for the express declaration of the prophet

himself, frequently forbids this ; but then it is maintained, that they are used in two senses, the one spiritual, and the other political. Thus the symbolical heaven, spiritually interpreted, is allowed to signify, the Christian dispensation, or Christ's kingdom on earth ; but this symbol is supposed to have also a political meaning, and is then understood to signify, ' the constitution, or government of a state or empire.'

The *Sun*, in the spiritual sense, symbolises our Lord, *the Sun of righteousness*, who is certainly the light of his own firmament : but in the political sense, this symbol is supposed to signify, ' a king, or emperor, the person holding the sovereign power.'

The *seven Stars* are declared to be the *angels of the seven churches*, at that time existing in Asia ; angels, as the Greek word signifies, meaning messengers or ministers, for St. John is directed to write to each of them. Stars, then symbolically signify, the lights or teachers of Christianity : but it is contended that this symbol also is to be sometimes taken in a political sense, and then signifies, ' princes, nobles, or great men.'

This second signification is for the most part, either derived from the prophecies of the Old Testament, many of which were undoubtedly of a political nature, or is deduced by analogy from the spiritual sense ; and in doing this, much learning and great ingenuity have been displayed. But the point wherein commentators seem to have failed, is in shewing the necessity for this two-fold accepta-

tion ; a necessity, which is altogether founded upon, or has grown out of the view of the subject, which they have thought fit to take. With the exception of Archdeacon Woodhouse, no commentator, that the author has met with, has yet fairly attempted to apply these symbols in one uniform sense ; or to interpret the prophecy exclusively on the spiritual principle, as foretelling the progress of pure religion in the heart of man ; which is the only true church of Christ. When so interpreted, no two-fold acceptance will be found necessary ; but a clear and connected view will unfold itself, not only simple and satisfactory in all its parts, but exempt from the charge of inconsistency in the interpretation ; each symbol being taken in that sense, which most frequently, if not uniformly belongs to it, in the language of our Saviour and his apostles.

But the introduction of this secondary or political meaning of the symbols, is not only objectionable, on the ground of its violating consistency of interpretation ; it is open to another, and not less weighty objection, which is, that this sense is after all, wholly inadequate to afford a satisfactory solution of the prophecy : in short, nothing but the strictest adherence to the spiritual meaning of the symbols, will be found capable of this.

The following examples, detailed at some length, may serve to prove the truth of this assertion ; and at the same time, to illustrate the latitude, which commentators have hitherto allowed themselves.

The fifth Trumpet of the Apocalypse is usually

explained as foretelling the rise of Mahommedism, or the irruption of the Saracens, which is symbolised in the vision, by a Swarm of Locusts. These locusts are characterised as follows; they have on their heads, *as it were, crowns of gold*; they have *'faces like the faces of men; hair as of women; and 'teeth like lions.'* They are commissioned, *'not to kill, but to torment the men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads;'* the pain they inflict is *'like the sting of a scorpion,'* and so intolerable, that *'men seek death, but do not find it, desire to die, but death flies from them.'*

For the explanation of this trumpet, Mr. Gauntlett's late work will furnish the fairest specimen of the usual plan of interpretation; first, because it is one of the latest written; and secondly, because this writer professes not to offer new views, but to select what is most approved from other commentators. The following is his exposition.

*'The crowns of gold are an evident allusion,'* he says *'to the turbans worn by the Saracens.'* They are said in the vision, to have *'faces as the faces of men,'* and *'hair like that of women.'* *'Accordingly,'* says Mr. Gauntlett, *'the Arabians wore their beards, or mustachios, while the long hair of their heads was flowing or plaited, like that of women.'* So far the interpretation is literal.

To proceed—their teeth were as the teeth of lions. *'This,'* says Mr. Gauntlett, *'may signify their rapacious fury,'* &c. changing here the principle of interpretation from literal to figurative. Their

commission 'to torment, but not to kill,' is explained as signifying, that they should plunder, ravage, and afflict, but not finally subdue the eastern empire. Here the interpretation is political.

'The sting in their tails denotes,' he says, 'the poisonous effects of their false religion;' the principle of interpretation being here changed from political to spiritual.

By the men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads, are 'evidently meant,' says Mr. Gauntlett, 'the corrupt, and hypocritical professors of Christianity;' this also being spiritually interpreted.

But what is meant by their 'seeking death, and not finding it,' by their 'desiring to die, and death flying from them,' is left unexplained; although this passage in the prophecy, as if to render it more emphatical, is enforced by repetition.

Thus we find the plan of interpretation continually changed, to suit the convenience of the interpreter; and an intractable passage, when it occurs, left without any explanation at all.

That no such latitude is necessary on the spiritual plan of interpretation, the following exposition may satisfy the reader. All that is requisite for obtaining a minute, distinct, and satisfactory explanation of every part of this prophecy, is to adhere closely to the scriptural meaning of the symbols; and in applying them, to view the events according to their spiritual import alone. The prophecy indeed is strictly historical throughout; but the events foretold in it are such as regard the moral

and religious, not the political state of the world. The same events may be viewed, but in a different light; and an exposition will thereby be obtained, not only consistent throughout in the principle of interpretation, but also more consonant with the dignity and importance of the subject; which is the progress of religion and virtue among men.

Pursuing this plan, the '*as it were crowns of gold*' on the heads of the locusts, are conceived to have a more important signification than that assigned in supposing them to refer to the turbans worn by the Saracens. They are understood to symbolise the *crown of martyrdom*, promised by Mahomet, to those who fell in his cause. By inspiring them with the hopes of Paradise, he roused the fanaticism of his followers; who willingly sacrificed their lives to obtain, not the true, but the spurious crown of martyrdom; the '*as it were crown of gold*.'

The '*faces of men*,' instead of alluding to the beards or mustachios of the Saracens, are also conceived to have a more important meaning. Man was created, as we are told, after the image of his Maker; not indeed corporeally, but mentally, that is, a rational being. The human face is thus the emblem of reason; and is here understood to designate the *manly and imposing aspect* of the doctrine and avowed object of Mahomet; which he insidiously pretended to be the restoration of true religion, and the extirpation of idolatry.

*Long hair* is considered in the east as emblematic

tic of effeminacy and allurements; and is here conceived to denote the means by which this artful impostor seduced his followers; namely, by allowing the indulgence of their favourite passions. While the '*teeth as of lions*,' declare the real objects of his pretended revelation; which were not religion, but conquest, devastation and dominion.

Their commission '*to torment, but not to kill*,' is well explained by history; which shews, that although they seduced into apostacy, yet they tolerated Christianity in the nations which they conquered; and did not wholly abolish it, as did their successors the Turks, who were commissioned to kill.

The torment they inflicted was, according to the true scriptural sense, no other than *the scorpion sting of conscience*, felt sooner or later by those who renounced their religion for worldly gain; these being the men who '*had not the seal of God in their foreheads*,' not having imbibed the true spirit of Christianity.

Their '*seeking death but not finding it*,' is readily explained on the same view. The life, that became burdensome to them, was *the life which is in Christ*, as it obstructed their worldly views; a life, which they were willing therefore to renounce, that the reproaches of conscience would not be diminished, and unable to eradicate their belief, the death which they sought for, fled from them.

Thus the spiritual sense affords an historical view of the events more accurate and minute than either political; and that without violating consistency.



ey of interpretation ; while the symbols are all taken according to the true scriptural signification.

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THE HEAVENLY LUMINARIES—SUN, MOON,  
AND STARS.

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Commentators on the Apocalypse are also agreed that the meaning of the symbolical language, is to be sought for in scripture itself. But their agreement in this principle signifies little, when there is such ample room for difference in its application ; as the political and spiritual plan of interpretation may be alike supported by scriptural authority.

But if the superiority of the spiritual be not apparent from the comparison just presented to the reader ; if the nature of the Messiah's kingdom be insufficient to shew the necessity for employing it in what relates to that kingdom ; then have we, as the last and most conclusive argument, the authority of our Lord himself and his apostles ; who employed the same symbols, in the sense here affixed to them, and interpreted several of the prophecies in which they are used, in the manner here adopted ; thus clearly pointing out what plan ought to be pursued with regard to the rest,

The *kingdom of Heaven* being equivalent to the kingdom of the Messiah, and signifying the Christian dispensation on earth, there seems little room to doubt what we are to understand by the heaven-

ly luminaries, the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*. But when we search the scriptures, we find that our Saviour calls himself '*the Light of the World*,' and applies the same phrase to his apostles. (John 8. 12. Matt. 5. 14.) Again, in the symbolical representation of our Lord, in the Rev. Ch. 1. V. 15. it is said,

'And his countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength.'

Further we find this symbol applied to him in Malachi, as follows, Ch. 4. V. 2.

'Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings.'

Thus we have sufficient authority for applying this symbol to our Lord himself; or by the simplest metonymy, it may signify his doctrine or religion.

With regard to the *Moon*, analogy alone would be sufficient, were other proof wanting, to shew that this symbol signifies the church, which receives its light from Christ, as the moon does from the sun; while the *Stars* are expressly declared in the prophecy before us, to be the angels or ministers of the church. Rev. Ch. 1. V. 20.

'The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.'

In conformity with this exposition, the darkening of the heavenly luminaries denotes the obscuring of the light of true religion, as by corrupting its purity; and the *falling of a star* means falling from the truth, as by apostacy. Equivalent to this is also the expression, '*the moon became as blood*,' or '*was turned into blood*;' the change of the pure silvery light of that

luminary into blood-red, figuratively signifying an inauspicious change in the light of the church, by the loss of its purity, either in doctrine or practice.

These three symbols occur together in Rev. Ch. 6. V. 12. as follows,

‘ And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind ; and the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together.’

Here we have a general eclipse of the glory of Christ’s kingdom, from a darkening of all the heavenly luminaries at once ; and accordingly that kingdom, or the figurative heaven, is then said to depart like a scroll that is rolled together. The latter part of this imagery, not only amplifies but explains the former ; and the whole appears to be taken from the prophet Joel, who used the same expressions in a prophecy, which was at the time of its fulfilment, about 400 years afterwards, applied by St. Peter to the day of Pentecost. The darkening of the heavenly luminaries was interpreted by him precisely in the manner here proposed ; as alluding to the transient failure of the divine light, which had then recently preceded the day of Pentecost, at the death of our Saviour.

Shortly after the apparent extinction of the Messiah’s kingdom, by the crucifixion of our Lord, and the temporary defection of his apostles ; the latter recovered from their recent consternation, and convinced of his resurrection, were now ashamed of their late desertion and denial of him ; and being

assembled together with one accord on the day of Pentecost, they then witnessed that most extraordinary manifestation of divine power, the visible effusion of the Holy Spirit, followed by the miraculous gift of tongues. On this great occasion did St. Peter declare, that the prophecy of Joel was therein fulfilled; which had foretold that in the latter days *'the spirit of God should be poured out upon all flesh.'*

He then went on to shew how Joel had also foretold, that *'this great and notable day,'* of which they were then witnesses, would be preceded by the darkening of the heavenly luminaries, or the apparent extinction of the Messiah's kingdom; an event which they had also recently seen at his crucifixion. And more distinctly to mark his crucifixion as the event alluded to by Joel, in the darkening of the heavenly luminaries; St. Peter not only specifies that event, but also proceeds to expound another prophecy, respecting our Lord's death and resurrection, spoken by David, as if of himself, but as St. Peter shews, applicable only to Christ.

Clear as is the fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy, and distinct as is St. Peter's interpretation, yet is *'that great and notable day'* by many supposed to refer to the fall of Jerusalem, or to the day of judgment; but without any sufficient reason that the writer has been able to discover; for if *'that day'* mean the day of judgment, how could St. Peter apply it to the day of Pentecost? or if

the fall of Jerusalem be alluded to by the darkening of the sun and moon, how could this be pointed out as preceding the events of the day of Pentecost, when it did not happen till forty years after ?

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KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD, OR OF ANTI-CHRIST.

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The meaning of the phrase *kingdom of Heaven* is rendered, if possible, still more obvious by its being contrasted in the Apocalypse, as we frequently find it in other parts of the New Testament, with '*the kingdom of this world.*' As the former is called either the kingdom of Heaven or of Christ, so the latter is styled the kingdom of this world or of Antichrist; being founded on principles which are ever at war with the feelings of true Christianity, namely, pride, ambition, avarice, the love of temporal power, and earthly grandeur; with the unrestrained indulgence of all the appetites and passions. That this is the true kingdom of Antichrist, and not exclusively the usurped dominion of the pope or of Mahomet, appears from the declaration, that Antichrist was in being even in the days of the apostles: papacy and Mahommedism are only the revival and open manifestation of that power, which reigns inwardly in the heart of man, whenever worldly feelings predominate over those of true religion. This acceptance of the phrase,

‘kingdom of this world,’ as distinguished from the kingdom of Heaven, in the language of our Saviour and his apostles, may be shewn by reference to numerous passages in the New Testament. For instance, our Lord, when interpreting his parable of the sower, which is an illustration of the two kingdoms at once, says, Matt. Ch. 13. V. 37.

‘He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them, is the devil.’ &c.

Here we have the two kingdoms contrasted, and both explained as referring to the present, and not to a future life; ‘*the field is the world.*’ And in the parable of the unjust steward, our Lord again contrasts the two kingdoms, when he says, Luke, Ch. 16. V. 8,

‘The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.’

that is, more zeal and ardour, more skill and cunning in pursuit of their object, are displayed by the *worldly*, than by the *heavenly* minded; the former styled, the children of this world, and the latter the children of light, or of the kingdom of the Messiah. In his prayer for his apostles, Christ says, John, Ch. 17, V. 14,

‘They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.’

that is, not devoted to worldly objects and pursuits; and St. John, in his first Epistle states, that

‘He is Antichrist who denieth the Father and the Son.’

and that there were at that time, ‘*many Antichrists,*’ (John, 1st Ep. 2. 18.) Thus the kingdoms

Of Christ and of Antichrist are distinctly contrasted, and the meaning of both is rendered sufficiently clear; and when once this is understood, and the spiritual exposition clearly established, there will be little occasion to dwell on the subordinate symbols. With most of these the reader of scripture will be already acquainted, and needs only be told that they are used in the Apocalypse, as elsewhere in the New Testament, in their ordinary and familiar acceptance.

For the convenience, however, of those who may be less conversant with the figurative language of scripture, the following are subjoined.

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#### THE DRAGON AND THE BEAST.

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As the Messiah is represented under the symbol of a Lamb 'slain for the sins of the world,' after the type of the Paschal lamb,—so Antichrist personified, is symbolised by a fire-coloured dragon, borrowed from his prototype the devil.

His empire is typified by two beasts, *one with seven heads and ten horns*, signifying the Roman empire; and the other *having two horns like a lamb, but speaking like a dragon*, and supposed to signify the Romish hierarchy, or the Latin church.

## LIFE AND DEATH.

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The terms, *life and death*, are constantly used in the spiritual sense by our Saviour and his apostles, and obviously have the same import in the Apocalypse; life, signifying the '*life which is in Christ*,' that is, the belief in him, with the practice of his religion; and death, '*the death unto righteousness*,' or, the disbelief in him, with the unrestrained indulgence of the passions, consequent to that disbelief. As in Matt. Ch. 16. V. 25.

'For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life, for my sake, shall find it.'

Spiritual is here evidently contrasted with natural life. And again in John, Ch. 6. V. 63.

'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'

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## TREES AND GRASS.

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These symbols are used by Christ to denote the converts to his religion, as in the parable of the sower,

'The good seed are the children of the kingdom.'

So also in Matt. Ch. 3. V. 10.

'Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.'

And again, Ch. 15. V. 13.

'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.'



So in the 1st Ep. of Peter, Ch. 1. V. 24.

‘For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.’

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#### SPRINGS AND FOUNTAINS.

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The pure doctrines of the gospel are expressed by this metaphor, which is so used by our Lord,

‘If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.’—John 7. 37.

As these are the source of spiritual life, so *poisoning the springs*, evidently means corrupting the purity of these doctrines.

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#### WATERS AND RIVERS.

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*Rivers* are often used in prophetic language, to symbolise the people residing on their borders, as in Isaiah, Ch. 8. V. 7.

‘Now, therefore, behold the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory.’

So also in the Apocalypse, ‘*the drying up of the Euphrates*,’ is understood to signify the downfall of the Ottoman empire.

*Waters* are expressly declared to have this meaning, in Rev. Ch. 17. V. 15.

‘The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.’

## SEA AND LAND.

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These symbols, when put in apposition, are used in scriptural language, to designate the Jewish and Gentile nations; *the land*, signifying the Jews or inhabitants of the holy land; and *the sea*, the Gentiles or the nations of Europe, called in Genesis, Ch. 10, ‘*The Isles of the Gentiles* ;’ a phrase, still familiar among the Jews.

*Ships*, accordingly signify, as Arch. Woodhouse observes, ‘those who are distinguished among the Gentiles for their eminence, and lift their heads above the plain of waters.’

‘How! ye ships of Tarshish’

is an address to the inhabitants of Tarshish, not literally to their ships.

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## MOUNTAIN AND ISLAND.

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These were considered as places of the greatest security from hostile invasion; accordingly in prophetic language, says Arch. Woodhouse, ‘*a mountain* signifies an eminent seat of power, civil or religious. Under such figurative language, the Christian religion is called *Mount Sion*, and is contrasted with the Jewish law, called *Mount Sinai*, in the Epistle to the Hebrews.’ A further explanation of this will appear in that of the next symbol, fire.

**FIRE AND SWORD,**

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Are terms frequently used in scripture, as the emblems of strife and discord ; thus in Matt, Ch, 10. V. 34.

‘ Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace but a sword.’

So also in Luke, Ch, 12. V. 51.

‘ Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell ye nay, but rather division.’

And again in the same chapter, V. 49.

‘ I am come to send fire on the earth.’

Accordingly the symbol *fire*, when in conjunction with the *mountain* ; as a ‘ *burning mountain*,’ will come to signify *religious discord* ; and in this sense it seems peculiarly applicable to those controversies, on the nature of the Godhead, which for two hundred years involved all Christendom in blood, and form the most prominent feature in the history of the fourth and fifth centuries.

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**BLOOD AND HAIL,**

*Blood*, which in figurative language has some latitude of meaning, seems in the original sense to be synonymous with murder or death ; as ‘ a man of blood’ means one who sheds blood. And such a one being esteemed polluted, as David, who was therefore forbidden to build the temple, so it signifies also pollution ; and in this sense, it is said, ‘ *the*

*sea was turned into blood,*’ as signifying the corruption of Christianity among the Gentile nations. Again, ‘*the moon became as blood,*’ or the purity of Christ’s church was polluted, when the disciples forsook and denied him at his crucifixion. So the harlot of Babylon, a persecuting and idolatrous church, is represented as ‘*drunk with the blood of the saints.*’ But as blood was atoned for by blood, it came to signify also the means of atonement or purification; so the saints are said to ‘*wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.*’ The context, however, will sufficiently shew in which sense it is used.

*Hail-storms*, which are destructive of vegetable life, when spiritually interpreted, signify storms that are injurious or fatal to spiritual life. The meaning of this symbol is rendered still less ambiguous, when conjoined, as it is in the Apocalypse, with the foregoing symbols, ‘*blood and fire* ;’ as ‘*storms of hail and fire, mingled with blood.*’

The bloody wars carried on between the fourth and fifth centuries, by the Christian bishops and patriarchs contending for power and supremacy, such as arose from the Donatist and other factions, and were eminently fatal to the cause of true religion, could not be represented by any symbol more strikingly applicable.

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#### FIRE, SMOKE, AND BRIMSTONE.

The source from which these are commonly represented as issuing, namely, the ‘*bottomless pit,*’ sufficiently stamps their character as signifying

what most commentators now admit, deadly and infernal doctrines, which darken the light of truth, and corrupt the purity of religion. As the symbol *fire* is used to signify heat and discord in other combinations, as '*fire and sword, hail and fire, the burning mountain,*' &c. so it may have the same signification here also; heat and animosity being the invariable attendants upon sectarian disagreement, arising from the corruption of true religion. To understand the symbols, *fire, smoke, and brimstone*, as signifying great guns and gunpowder, seems to be a force upon prophetic language, unworthy,' says Archdeacon Woodhouse, 'of the respectable names, which have countenanced the interpretation.' To which we may add, that they occur repeatedly in the prophecy, while there is only one instance in which they can possibly be applied to the invention of artillery and gunpowder, and that not the first instance of their occurrence.

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#### THUNDER, LIGHTENING, AND EARTHQUAKE.

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These symbols evidently denote great commotions of some kind, and most commonly signify denunciations of divine wrath, as in Isaiah, Ch. 13. V. 13.

'Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.'

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In the prophetic language of the Old Testament, they frequently announced convulsions of a political nature; but in relation to the kingdom of the Messiah, they are most likely to bear a spiritual import; accordingly they are employed under the seventh Seal, to foretel the evils about to arise from the reign of Antichrist; under the seventh Trumpet they predict those attendant upon his downfall; and under the seventh Vial they announce the last judgments of heaven upon the followers of the beast. Wherever else they occur in the Apocalypse, they will be found in like manner to intimate the approach of some great convulsion in the moral or spiritual world.

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#### CORN, WINE, AND OIL.

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The abundance of Christ's kingdom is thus described by Jeremiah, in a prophecy foretelling the restoration of Israel;

'Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil,' &c.—Jerem. Ch. 31. V. 13.

and as metaphorically signifying the food of spiritual life, are these symbols always interpreted, when taken in the spiritual sense.

'*Hurt not the oil and the wine,*' therefore literally signifies, corrupt not the scriptures.

In the parable of the husbandman, Luke, Ch. 8. V. 11. our Saviour expressly declares, that

‘The seed is the word of God.’

### THE LOCUST SWARM.

The swarms of these insects, which are most destructive to the food that supports *natural life*, figuratively represent swarms, that are destructive to the food of *spiritual life*; and accordingly are so interpreted, when understood as alluding to the Saracen hosts; which in the seventh century issued from Arabia, the land of locusts, destroying Christianity, as far as lay in their power, and substituting Mahommedism in its place, wherever they came.

It may afford some confirmation, that the Arabs are intended in the prophecy by this symbol, though the writer is not aware of its having been urged before, that Arab, in the Hebrew language is the root of the word that signifies a locust, אַרְבֵּה Arabe, and although the prophecy was written in Greek, the symbols are mostly borrowed from the Old Testament; where this will be found, as in Joel, in connection with the preceding symbols, corn, wine, and oil, of which they are destructive.

‘And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and with oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.—Joel, Ch. 2. V. 24 & 25.

## FAMINE AND PESTILENCE.

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Spiritual famine is not '*a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord.*' (Amos, Ch. 8. V. 11.) This dearth of spiritual food is by the prophets often contrasted with the plenty of Christ's kingdom, abounding with '*corn, wine, and oil,*' symbols used to signify the food of religious knowledge.

As famine in the natural world is productive of pestilence, so is it also in the spiritual. Pestilence is among those diseases of the body, which are most contagious, as well as most fatal to *natural life*; so analogy directs us to seek for the corresponding calamity among the diseases of the mind, which are most contagious, as well as most fatal to *spiritual life*. These characteristics both belong to superstition and fanaticism, which moreover flow from spiritual dearth and ignorance, as naturally as pestilence follows famine.

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## FORNICATION AND DRUNKENNESS,

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In spiritual and prophetic language, seem to be nearly synonymous, as in the expression '*drunk with the cup of her fornications,*' and signify idolatry; thus we find in Judges, Ch. 8. V. 33. and elsewhere,



‘The children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim.’

The *spiritual Babylon*, an idolatrous and persecuting church, is thus represented, as a harlot decorated in purple and scarlet, and drunk with the blood of the saints ; while the true church of Christ, *the New Jerusalem*, appears as a pure and chaste bride, arrayed in white and resplendent linen, expressly called, ‘the righteousness of the saints.’ Rev. Ch. 19. V. 8.

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#### THE ALLEGORICAL PARTURITION.

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In like manner the *mother religion*, supposed here to signify Judaism, which gave birth to Christianity, the symbolical *male child*, that was preordained to rule all nations, is represented by a woman, adorned with the heavenly luminaries, emblems of light and truth. Rev. Ch. 12. V. 1.

Our Saviour, speaking comfort to his disciples, shortly before his crucifixion, used this metaphor.

‘A woman when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come ; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.’ John, Ch. 16. V. 21.

Applying this metaphor to his disciples, was applying it to his church ; and thus we have our Lord’s authority for interpreting the allegorical parturition, as typifying the sufferings of the church,

which did not cease till Christianity was finally established in the fourth century.

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PROPHETIC TIME;

Is calculated by the Jewish year, which is composed of 12 months, of 30 days each, or 360 days; being 5 days less than the solar or Julian year, and when leap year intervenes, a difference of 6 days must be allowed for. This, in a long period, will amount to some thing considerable, as it makes no less than 18 years in the period of 1260, which is thus reduced to 1242. But a still more important point, and one upon which nearly all commentators now coincide is, that the prophetic day means a year, and thus a prophetic year will amount to 360 years. Nor is the sanction of scriptural authority wanting here, for we find in Ezekiel, Ch. 4. V. 5. and 6. as follows.

‘For I have laid upon thee, the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, &c.—I have appointed them each day for a year.’

It seems also worthy of remark, though the writer has no where met with this observation, that the word which in the Hebrew language signifies a day, frequently occurs in scripture, where it must mean a year, and accordingly is so translated. As in the 1st Sam. Ch. 2. V. 19.

‘Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year.’

in the original *מִיּוֹם לַיּוֹם* signifying literally from day to day.

**HORSE AND RIDER.**

Taken in conjunction, these symbols are manifestly an emblem of progress ; but the nature of the progress announced by them, depends upon the adventitious circumstances.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.—Psalm 45. V. 3 & 4.

The purport of this splendid passage cannot be mistaken, and is understood as a prophetic allusion to the same subject, as that announced by the rider on the white horse in the Apocalypse.

*The white horse* being used to grace the pomp of triumph, while his rider is armed with the bow, and decorated with the crown, unequivocally denotes triumphant career and success ; spiritually applied, the success of the gospel of Christ.

*The red horse*, and his rider armed with the sword, simply announce slaughter and bloodshed ; but spiritually interpreted, these signify religious strife and discord.

*The black horse*, with his rider carrying a yoke, and the accompanying voice that proclaims famine, denote the progress of spiritual darkness, dearth, and bondage.

*The livid-green horse*, and his rider Death, followed by Hell, distinctly declare the progress of sin, which is spiritual death, or the 'death unto righteousness,' of which hell is the award or consequence,

## THE TWO WITNESSES.

The following declaration of our Lord, is sufficient to prove who are meant by his witnesses.

‘ Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.’ John, Ch. 5. V. 30.

The accordance of these symbols, in every particular may also be adduced in confirmation of their alluding to the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, and will furnish ample testimony in favour of this interpretation.

Our Lord’s declaration indeed at that time could only refer to the scriptures of the Old Testament, as the New was not then written; but it will hardly be questioned, that to the Christian at least, though not to the Jew, the testimony of the latter is equally convincing.

## THE SEALS, TRUMPETS, AND VIALS.

The three septenaries of these, into which the prophecy is subdivided, have also a symbolical signification, that deserves to be noticed. Thus, *the Seals* appear to intimate that their contents should for a time be hidden, or kept secret. *The Trumpets* being implements of war, seem to declare that the subjects which they communicate are of a warlike nature; not indeed in the political sense, but spiritually at war with, or hostile to Christianity. And the pouring out of *the Vials*, or as the word  $\phi\iota\alpha\lambda\eta$

may be more properly rendered the Cup, is clearly the pouring out of the 'Cup of wrath,' or the judgment of Heaven upon a sinful world.

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Besides these which have been enumerated, other symbols will be met with in the prophecy, which it is not necessary to enlarge upon here. These being sufficient to establish and illustrate the true principles of interpretation, the others will be explained as they occur.



**A**  
**CONCISE EXPOSITION**  
**OF**  
**THE APOCALYPSE,**  
**SO FAR AS**  
**THE PROPHECIES**  
**ARE FULFILLED.**





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## CONCISE EXPOSITION,

ETC. ETC.

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HAVING fully considered the subject to which it relates, and the language in which it is unfolded, we are now duly prepared to enter upon the examination of the prophecy itself.

Miracles are conclusive evidence of divine interposition to those who witness their performance; but no historical testimony, however strong, can be equally convincing to those who only hear of them. On this account, the Christians of the apostolic age are conceived to have had much stronger grounds for belief than we possess in the present day. Modern sceptics require, that the power of performing miracles should either have been transmitted from age to age, or that some perpetual miracle should have been left to satisfy their doubts.

That this would have satisfied them, is not so certain: all who saw miracles were not convinced: ancient as well as modern scepticism had its reasons for disbelief; and the agency of demons was urged by some who were eye-witnesses as the ground of objection.

The Christian revelation, however, is supported by testimony sufficient to remove all objections; and if not strong enough to satisfy those who would not be convinced although one rose from the dead, yet is it such as places the believers of the present day on at least an equal footing with those of the apostolic age.

In the first place, this testimony is *miraculous*; in the next, it is *perpetual*. All who desire it, may be eye-witnesses. And, unlike the miracles witnessed by the first Christians, which become less convincing to succeeding generations, this goes on from age to age, progressively increasing in the force of its evidence.

Such a miracle is prophecy, and especially the Apocalypse,—the last revelation from God to man.

The subject of this prophecy is the most important in the sight of Heaven, and should be esteemed the most interesting by man,—a history of the progress and final establishment of true religion.

Communicated in the language of metaphor, it does not admit of interpretation before the events are fulfilled, though it afterwards becomes perfectly clear and satisfactory. This history is full and circumstantial; nothing material connected with the subject is omitted; and the uniform employment of the same metaphors, renders the interpretation more easy and more convincing, the farther we proceed.

The present attempt to develope this history, is founded upon the same general principles as the able and excellent dissertation of Archdeacon Woodhouse; from which also is borrowed, in a great measure, the interpretation of the metaphorical language. The chief point of difference between them, regards the chronological order of events, or the particular application of each symbol to the corresponding period of history.

This difference rests upon the following ground: where the corruptions of Christianity are foretold, it seems reasonable to expect that they should be announced in the prophecy, at least as early as they are stated to have occurred in history; that is, as soon as they can be said to have distinctly taken place.

Now the Archdeacon has more frequently chosen that period at which the corruptions in question had reached their summit; and thus, although the symbols are applied to similar events, yet the chronological arrangement that results is totally different.

The plan of the Apocalypse is as follows: the whole is comprised in the Book with Seven Seals; but in this is contained another, called the Little Book, being a supplement to the former, and relating exclusively to the history of religion in the West, while the other relates chiefly to its progress in the East, as will hereafter appear.

The Seven Seals are opened in succession, and at the opening of each some important change or event is announced. The chronological order in which these events



follow each other, will be found surprisingly regular; an almost uniform period of half a century intervening between each.

At the opening of the Seventh Seal, a new order and a fresh series of events present themselves, announced by seven angels with seven trumpets. The events unfolded at the sounding of each trumpet, have the same intervening periods as those contained under each seal; unless a deviation from that order is expressly declared in the prophecy.

The first notable exception to this chronological order occurs under the Fifth Trumpet, which foretells the rise of the Saracen empire, occupying a period of 150 years. The next occurs at the foundation of the Turkish dominion, which, from its complete establishment on the ruins of Christianity in the East, is announced to continue 391 years. After this, the scene changes from the East to the West; and in order to give a complete view of this branch of the subject, the prophet reverts to the earliest periods of Christianity. This is the subject of the Little Book, the contents of which are unfolded after the sounding of the Sixth Trumpet, and embrace a period of 1260 years; with a prefatory view of such events preceding that period, as are intimately connected with its history. The Seventh Trumpet, like the Seventh Seal, branches off into a new series of events, announced by seven angels pouring out the contents of Seven Vials. Under these the period of 1260 years is brought to a close, and with this terminates the present treatise.

The three septenaries of the seals, the trumpets, and the vials, relate each to a different series of events. The Seals describe the gradual corruption, and, at length, almost total extinction of true Christianity. The Trumpets treat of the rise, progress, and final establishment of the dominion of Antichrist in the East; while the Little Book shows his progress in the West; and the Vials relate to the subversion of his dominion, and the restoration of true religion.

Much difference of opinion prevails respecting the precise places at which the Little Book begins and ends; some commentators assigning to it three, some four, and others more chapters; but as they for the most part coincide as to the subject of which those chapters treat (a far more important question), the writer has not thought it necessary to enter into this discussion.

By the word "book" is here to be understood, as is well known to the classical reader, a roll or sheet: seven of which are supposed to be folded one over the other in the book with seven seals, and each separately sealed; and of course the Little Book, which is declared to be open at its appearance, will naturally be so, as it is contained under the Seventh Seal, and does not come into view until after that seal has been broken.

The development of the prophetic part of the Apocalypse does not begin before the sixth chapter.

The first three are occupied by epistles to each of the seven churches in Asia, which were then the centre of the Christian world, and to which the prophecy is particularly addressed, as first foretelling the progress of religion in the East.

The fourth chapter presents the vision of a throne in heaven, and One in "nameless majesty" seated thereon. Around the throne are four and twenty Elders clothed in white raiment, and crowned with crowns of gold; and four living Creatures full of eyes before and behind; and before the throne are seven lamps burning, called the seven Spirits of God.

In the fifth chapter, the book of prophecy, which was seen in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, being sealed with seven seals, is given to the Lamb, who is declared to be alone worthy to open the seals. When the Lamb has received the book, the four living Creatures, and the four and twenty Elders, having harps, and golden vials full of incense, fall prostrate before the Lamb; and along with them, an innumerable company of Angels join, in giving praise to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb.

With the sixth chapter begins the opening of the seals.

The explanation of the fourth and fifth chapters, not attempted in the former edition, but now submitted to the reader, requiring more ample discussion than could be reduced into the columnar form, like the rest of the exposition, is subjoined to the Appendix.

(See Note O.)

# OPENING OF THE SEALS.

## THE FIRST SEAL.

### CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 32 — 100.

Verse 1 *And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four living creatures saying, Come and see.*

2 *And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.*

Our Saviour opens the book of prophecy, foretelling the progress of Christianity. The first seal presents the apostolic age, pure, uncorrupted, and triumphant.

White is emblematic of purity and truth; the crown, of glory—the reward of martyrdom; the bow denotes conquest. By truth, purity, and suffering, the Gospel conquers, and is to conquer.

(See Note A in the *Appendix*.)

Mosheim thus speaks of the apostolic age: “ Their very language (the apostles’) possessed an incredible energy, an amazing power of sending light into the understanding, and conviction into the heart. To this were added, the commanding influence of stupendous miracles, the foretelling of future events, the power of discerning the secret thoughts and intentions of the heart, a magnanimity superior to all difficulties, a contempt of riches and honours, a serene tranquillity in the face of death, and an invincible patience under torments still more dreadful than death itself; and all this accompanied with lives free from stain, and adorned with the constant practice of sublime virtue.”

“ Thus were the messengers of the divine Saviour, the heralds of his spiritual and immortal kingdom, furnished for their glorious work, as the unanimous voice of ancient history so loudly testifies. The event sufficiently declares this; for without these remarkable and extraordinary circumstances, no rational account can be given of the rapid propagation of the Gospel throughout the world.”— *Mosh.* vol. i. p. 67.

## THE SECOND SEAL.

CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 100 — 150.

Verse 3 *And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come and see.*

4 *And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.*

But corruptions soon crept into the church, denoted by the change from white to fiery-red.

Fire colour is emblematic of heat and animosity. The sword denotes strife and discord. By these was the purity of Christianity first corrupted in the century succeeding the apostolic age; as early, at least, as the beginning of the second century.

“It will easily be imagined (says Mosheim), that peace and unity could not long reign in the church, since it was composed of Jews and Gentiles, who regarded each other with the bitterest aversion. Besides, as the converts to Christianity could not extirpate radically the prejudices formed in their minds by education, and confirmed by time, they brought with them into the bosom of the church more or less of the errors of their former religions. Thus the seeds of discord and controversy were early sown, and could not fail to spring up soon into animosities and dissensions, which accordingly broke out and divided the church.”—*Mosh.* vol. i. p. 121.

Blending the philosophy of the schools with the simple doctrines of the Gospel, had become universally prevalent early in the second century, and produced various sects. The Grecian, the Oriental, and the Egyptian philosophy, had each its votaries; and these opposed each other with the usual animosity of sectarian zeal.

Archdeacon Woodhouse, from whom this interpretation of the first three seals is borrowed, dates the second period from the end of the second century, whereas Mosheim's remarks apply to the first. This may warrant the adoption of a middle course, by taking the beginning of the second century.

## THE THIRD SEAL.

### CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 150 — 200.

Verse 5 *And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a yoke in his hand;*

6 *And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A chanix of wheat for a denarius, and three chanices of barley for a denarius; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*

The third period is marked by the rise of superstition and monasticism. The change of colour denotes darkness; the high price, scarcity; and the yoke is the emblem of bondage;

Figuratively signifying, intellectual darkness; spiritual dearth; and the thralldom of ignorance and superstition. The Scriptures were however still held sacred, and not violated, as at a later period.

(See Note B in the Appendix.)

The origin of monasticism is assigned by Mosheim to the second century, and traced up to the Egyptian philosophy. "It was in Egypt that this morose discipline had its rise; and it is observable that this country has in all times, as it were by an immutable law of nature, abounded with persons of a melancholy complexion, and produced, in proportion to its extent, more gloomy spirits than any other part of the world. It was here that the Essenes and the Therapeutæ, those dismal and gloomy sects, dwelt principally, long before the coming of Christ; as also many of the Ascetic tribe, who, led by a certain melancholy turn of mind, and a delusive notion of rendering themselves more acceptable to the Deity by their austerities, withdrew themselves from human society, and from all the innocent pleasures and comforts of life. Hence arose that train of austere and superstitious vows and rites that still in many places throw a veil over the beauty and simplicity of the Christian religion. Hence the celibacy of the priestly order, the rigour of unprofitable penances and mortifications, the innumerable swarms of monks, who, in the senseless pursuit of a visionary sort of perfection, refused their talents and labours to society," &c. — *Mosh.* vol. i. p. 197.

## THE FOURTH SEAL.

## CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 200 — 250.

Verse 7 *And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come and see.*

8 *And I looked, and behold a pale livid-green horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him; and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with pestilence, and with the beasts of the earth.*

The fourth is a still more lamentable change, denoted by death, with hell following after.

Death is the death unto righteousness. Hell is the award of sin. The causes of this death, before announced, are here repeated; namely, the sword, or strife; hunger, or spiritual dearth; pestilence, or superstition and fanaticism; and the beasts of the earth, denoting the passionate and worldly propensities of man. By these was the corruption of Christianity consummated before the end of the third century.

(See Note C in the *Appendix*.)

"Though several (says Mosheim) continued to exhibit to the world illustrious examples of primitive piety and Christian virtue, yet many were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness; puffed up with vanity, arrogance, and ambition; possessed with a spirit of contention and discord; and addicted to many other vices, that cast an undeserved reproach upon the holy religion of which they were the unworthy ministers. This is testified in such an ample manner by the repeated complaints of many of the most respectable writers of this age, that truth will not permit us to spread the veil, which we should otherwise be desirous to cast over such enormities among an order so sacred."—Vol. i. p. 266.

"The bishops assumed in many places a princely authority. . . . .

"The example of the bishops was ambitiously imitated by the presbyters. . . . .

"The deacons, beholding the presbyters thus deserting their functions, boldly usurped their rights and privileges; and the effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the sacred order."—Vol. i. p. 266.

## THE FIFTH SEAL.

### CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 250 — 312.

Verse 9 *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.*

10 *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*

11 *And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

Persecution against the Christians prevailed more or less through the whole of the preceding periods, but no one seems more appropriate for announcing it than this.

From the year 249, the persecutions became more universal and more terrible, as Mosheim informs us, than any preceding.

From the year 303 to 313, the most dreadful persecution of all occurred, under Diocletian. After this it ceased in a great measure, for Christianity became nominally the religion of the empire by the conversion of Constantine, and only ceased to be so for a short time under the apostasy of Julian.

Some have supposed the livid-green horse, and his rider Death, in the preceding seal, to symbolize the age of persecution, and to represent the church as about to expire under its sufferings. But, not to dwell on the useless repetition of the same subject, thereby rendered unavoidable in this seal, such an interpretation of the last does not accord with the nature of the symbols. If Death represent the church expiring under persecution, yet Hell can never be understood as following such a death, but rather eternal life, and the crown of glory; such being the reward of martyrdom in the cause of true religion.

That the most remarkable persecutions occurred within this period, appears from the following accounts: "The accession of Decius Trajan to the imperial throne (says Mosheim), in the year 249, raised a new tempest, in which the fury of persecution fell in a dreadful manner upon the church of Christ. For this emperor, either from an ill-

grounded fear of the Christians, or from a violent zeal for the superstition of his ancestors, published most cruel and terrible edicts; by which the prætors were ordered, upon pain of death, either to extirpate the whole body of Christians without exception, or to force them, by torments of various kinds, to return to the pagan worship. The most unhappy circumstance of all these cruelties, was their fatal influence upon the faith and constancy of many of the sufferers; for as *this persecution was much more terrible than all those that preceded it*, so a great number of Christians, dismayed, not at the approach of death, but at the aspect of those lingering torments, fell from the profession of their faith." — *Mosh.* vol. i. p. 249.

He thus speaks of the Diocletian persecution: "In the second year of this horrible persecution, the 304th of the Christian era, a fourth edict was published by Diocletian, at the instigation of Galerius, and the other inveterate enemies of the Christian name. By it the magistrates were ordered and commissioned to force all Christians, without distinction of rank or sex, to sacrifice to the gods, and were authorized to employ all sorts of torments in order to drive them to this apostacy. The diligence and zeal of the Roman magistrates in the execution of this inhuman edict, nearly proved fatal to the Christian cause." — *Mosh.* vol. i. p. 317.

The termination of these calamities is thus noticed by him: "After this victory (over Maxentius), which happened in the year 312, Constantine, and his colleague Licinius, immediately granted to the Christians a full power of living according to their own laws and institutions; which power was specified still more clearly in another edict, drawn up at Milan in the following year."

"About the same time, Constantine, who had hitherto discovered no religious principles of any kind, embraced Christianity, in consequence, as it is said, of a miraculous cross which appeared to him in the air, as he was marching toward Rome to attack Maxentius." — *Mosh.* vol. i. p. 320.



## THE SIXTH SEAL.

## CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 312.

Verse 12 *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal; and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair; and the moon became as blood;*

13 *And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*

14 *And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:*

15 *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains;*

16 *And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

17 *For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

The symbols of this seal, borrowed from the description of the last day, divide themselves into three parts; the dissolution of nature, the tribulation of the wicked, and the protection afforded to the blessed.

Metaphorical descriptions, taken from the same subject, are elsewhere used in Scripture to foretell the fate of kingdoms; and the subject here is the kingdom of Christ.

The heavenly luminaries, the lights of true religion, are so darkened by man's depravity, that this kingdom is said to depart like a scroll rolled together.

The tribulation that awaits the wicked at the last day, figuratively portrays the troubles which, even in this world, harass the minds of those who are exclusively bent on worldly pursuits.

While these troubles are a type of their future punishment, the calm serenity of the true Christian is a type of his future felicity.

The wrath of the Lamb sufficiently indicates the subject to which the symbols are to be applied.

Although Archdeacon Woodhouse refers the application of this seal to the final day of retribution, yet he allows that the same description and expressions are repeatedly used in Scripture to foretell the fate of kingdoms, and in this light they are understood here by most other commentators. But the dissolution of nature, and departure of the heavens, are

commonly supposed to signify the abolition of paganism ; and the happy state of the blessed which follows, is supposed to allude to the prosperity of the church under Constantine. Now, although it may be admitted that a minute explanation of each particular word is not to be looked for in a description so highly figurative as this, yet we cannot admit an explanation which involves a manifest violation of the most prominent parts of the metaphor. Thus the heavenly luminaries, emblems of light and truth, can never symbolize the pagan mythology. Nor can the happy state of the blessed be applicable to a church which had been described as gradually approaching, and as having at length arrived at the utmost degree of degeneracy and corruption.

To warrant the application of the symbols here proposed, the real state of the church under Constantine, and the nature of those corruptions, from which the true servants of God, next mentioned, alone escaped, need only be displayed in their true colours, as thus described by Archdeacon Woodhouse :

“ Now, the history of this period, faithfully related, informs us, that although the Christian church was delivered from persecution, and advanced in worldly consideration and power, yet did it acquire no real accession of worth, dignity, or exaltation, by its connexion with the imperial throne. Nay, from that very time, its degeneracy and corruption are most indubitably to be dated. From that period, worldly power and riches became the objects of its leaders, not purity and virtue. Many entered the Christian church, and obtained its honours and dignities, by base dissimulation of their principles, to please the emperor, and recommend themselves to his favour : and the consequent extension of the Christian religion among the heathen nations was, as Mosheim observes, in name only, not in reality. The worldly professors of Christianity in this century were so far from fulfilling the prophecy, by “ washing their robes white,” and by being fed and conducted by the Lamb, that they appear rather to have assumed the hue of another leader, the fire-coloured dragon, and to have greedily sought from him those worldly riches, and that power which their Lord had refused at his hands.” — *Woodhouse*, p. 191.

(See Note D in the *Appendix*.)

## THE SIXTH SEAL

CONTINUED.

## CHAPTER VII.

A.D. 312.

Verse 1 *And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that they should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.*

2 *And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,*

3 *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

4 *And I heard the number of the sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

5 *Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.*

6 *Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.*

7 *Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.*

The four winds, as ministers of divine wrath, are for a time withheld from executing judgment upon the earth, the sea, and the trees, signifying the Jew and Gentile converts to Christianity.

Of these all were not equally corrupt. Some, amidst the general corruption, retained the true faith, and the pure religion of Jesus.

These are marked as the true servants of God, and will be exempted from the evils about to fall upon the unsealed.

The number of the sealed is then stated; first the Jews, according to the tribes of Israel; and afterwards the Gentiles.

According to the Gospel, "salvation is to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile also." Israel being the root on which the Gentile church is engrafted.

"This body of the sealed," says Archdeacon Woodhouse, "may be literally of the tribes of Israel, or of the purer Gentile church, called also in Scripture, 'the Israel of God.'"

"There seems no expression here sufficient to determine whether the 144,000 be lineal or adopted Israelites."

8 *Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.*

9 *After this I beheld, and lo a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ;*

10 *And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

11 *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God.*

12 *Saying, Amen ; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen.*

13 *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? And whence came they ?*

14 *And I said unto him, Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

15 *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

16 *And they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more,*

The number of the sealed is not to be understood as representing a definite and precise number, but "as expressive of fulness and perfection."

This multitude evidently alludes, not to the number of the true Christian church at any one period, but to the whole number of the faithful, through successive ages, to the end of the world.

Their being clothed in white raiments, denotes their purity, as they are washed from their sins.

The palms in their hands are signals of joy, festivity, and victory ; and ascribing their salvation to God and their Redeemer,

—they give glory to God, and to the Lamb, uniting in one general chorus of praise and thanksgiving.

As the evils about to befall the corrupt were foretold in metaphors borrowed from the day of judgment, so are likewise the comfort and protection promised to the faithful.

The one and the other refer to the state of Christianity on earth, though conveyed in terms expressive of man's state in a future existence.

The evils which await the wicked, are of a moral, not of a political nature ; so likewise are the comforts promised to those who hold the true faith.

Not literal, but spiritual hunger and thirst, must be under-

*neither shall the sun light on them,  
nor any heat.*

*17 For the Lamb which is in  
the midst of the throne shall feed  
them, and shall lead them unto  
living fountains of waters; and  
God shall wipe away all tears from  
their eyes.*

stood. The sun is the emblem of religious light; its ray warms by true devotion, scorches in fanaticism, is obscured by superstition. Its genial warmth alone is felt by the true Christian.

The peace and tranquillity he enjoys on earth, are a type of the happiness that awaits him in heaven. The fountains are the doctrines of the Gospel, giving life and comfort to those who receive them.

If the former part of this seal admits of a figurative interpretation, and applies to the corruption or loss of true religion on earth, rather than to the day of judgment, then must this also be applied, in the same manner, to the pure and uncorrupted. Indeed, were this part of the vision to be taken literally, as alluding to the day of final retribution, and not, like the rest, metaphorically interpreted, as foretelling the progress of Christianity, then ceasing to be a part of the prediction, it would hardly have been made to occupy one in the series of the six seals. Literally understood, this description portrays the happy state of the blessed in a future existence; but figuratively applied to the true Christian on earth, or those who resist the contagion of the times, and retain their faith and purity, it seems to represent that serenity and resignation which characterised the Christians of the apostolic age; that peace of mind and magnanimity which were displayed by the apostles themselves, and sustained them under every trial. The same courage and constancy were evinced by later martyrs in the face of death, and would not only support and console the true Christian, who must needs lament the general corruptions that prevailed, but would also shield and protect him from the influence of their pernicious example.

Thus, deducing the figurative from the literal sense of this part of the vision, the troubles which the wicked bring upon themselves in this life, become a type of the torments that await them in the next; and, in like manner, the tranquillity enjoyed by the good on earth, is a type of the happiness which is promised to them in heaven.

## THE SEVENTH SEAL.

### CHAPTER VIII.

*Verse 1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half a season.*

*2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.*

*3 And another angel came, and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

*4 And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand.*

*5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.*

A.D. 312 — 350.

The conversion of Constantine produced a momentary calm; but it was only the harbinger of the storms which followed.

These visitations or calamities are aptly introduced by the sound of trumpets, implements of war.

The nature of them now unfolds itself, as arising out of the corruptions of Christianity. Incense ascending to heaven, symbolizes religion pure and holy, till corrupted by the worldly passions of man.

These corruptions of religion, and the persecution of the saints, are represented as calling down the visitations on the earth.

Fire from the altar, cast into the earth, distinctly announces religion, when corrupted by man, to be the cause that produces the commotions in question, which are symbolized by voices, and thunderings, and earthquakes, &c.

The term "heaven" in the first verse, is used in a different acceptation from that which belonged to it in the last seal. It must be here understood as the place where the vision is seen; but there as a part of the vision itself; distinguishing heaven from the earth, which is noticed after it.

The state of the church at this time, and the nature of the commotions that ensued, as well as their cause, will appear from the account of Mosheim which follows: "When the terrors of persecution were totally dispelled, and the church, secured from the efforts of its enemies, enjoyed the

sweets of prosperity and peace; when the major part of the bishops exhibited to their flock the contagious examples of arrogance, luxury, effeminacy, animosity, and strife, with other vices too numerous to mention; when the inferior rulers and doctors of the church fell into a slothful and opprobrious negligence of the duties of their stations, and employed in vain wranglings and idle disputes that zeal and attention which were due to the cultivation of piety, and to the instruction of their people; and when (to complete the enormity of this horrid detail) multitudes were drawn into the profession of Christianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain, or the fear of punishment; then it was indeed no wonder that the church was contaminated with shoals of profligate Christians, and the virtuous few were oppressed and overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the wicked and licentious."—*Mosh.* vol. i. p. 383.

The first six Seals appear from history to follow each other at intervals of about half a century; the Seventh Seal branches off into seven Trumpets, and these will be seen to follow with almost equal regularity. But not to saddle the interpretation with superfluous difficulties, the events of two Trumpets are taken together, as they were subsequently coexistent, and as nothing in the prophecy declares them to be otherwise. This however is the case with the four first only; the three last evidently follow each other in succession; and are mostly distinguished from the four preceding, by the appellation of the three Wo Trumpets.

The four first, taken together, form a distinct and complete picture by themselves, comprising a period of about two centuries, and presenting separate views of each of the component parts of the natural world, — the land, the sea, the rivers and fountains, and the heavenly luminaries. How this division applies to the moral world, will be seen in the sequel.

## THE FIRST TRUMPET.

### CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 350 — 450.

Verse 6 *And the seven angels, which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.*

The visitations announced as falling on different parts of the natural world figuratively apply to the moral world.

7 *And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood; and they were cast upon the land; and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*

Trees and grass signify converts of religion; "all flesh is grass;" green grass, "the gaily flourishing." Hail, fire, and blood, denote storms of strife and contention. History will best explain the nature and cause of these storms.

(See Note E in the Appendix.)

The history of the fourth and fifth century is almost entirely engrossed with the contentions of the bishops and patriarchs for power and supremacy. — See *Mosheim*. "For, in proportion as the bishops multiplied their privileges, and extended their usurpations, the patriarchs gained new accessions of power, by the despotism which they exercised over the episcopal order. They fomented also divisions among the bishops, and excited animosities between them and the other members of the church. They went still farther, and sowed the seeds of discord between the clergy and the people, that all these combustions might furnish them with perpetual matter for the exercise of their authority, and procure them a multitude of clients and dependants. . . . .

"To these lamentable evils were added, the ambitious quarrels and the bitter animosities of the patriarchs themselves, which produced the most bloody wars, and the most detestable and horrid crimes. . . . .

"The attentive inquirer into the affairs of the church from this period, will find . . . . . that these ignominious schisms flowed chiefly from the unchristian contention for dominion and supremacy which reigned among those who set themselves up for the fathers and defenders of the church." — *Mosheim*, vol. ii. p. 27.



## THE SECOND TRUMPET.

### CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 350 — 450.

Verse 8 *And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood;*

In scriptural language, the Christian religion is called Mount Sion, and the Jewish Mount Sinai. Fire is the emblem of strife; thus a burning mountain symbolizes religious controversy.

9 *And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died, and the third part of the ships was destroyed.*

Life is the life in Christ. Ships mean inhabitants, not literally ships; "howl, ye ships of Tarshish." — *Isaiah*, xxiii. 1.

History furnishes no event that can be more aptly symbolized by the burning mountain than the Trinitarian controversy, which occurred at this period, as Mosheim informs us, and for two centuries without intermission engaged the whole Christian world.

"The subject of this fatal controversy, which kindled such deplorable divisions throughout the Christian world, was the doctrine of Three Persons in the Godhead; a doctrine which, in the three preceding centuries, had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas." — *Mosh.* vol. i. p. 411.

This controversy (the most momentous that ever divided the Christian world, and which, besides its pernicious influence on religion, has actually caused more bloodshed than the subversion of the Roman empire), arose in the fourth century, gained entire possession of men's minds in the fifth, and raged with unremitting fury till the middle of the sixth, when it abated, according to Mosheim. "Whether this change was produced by the force of reason and argument, or by the influence of hopes and fears, we shall not pretend to determine. One thing however is certain, that from this period the Arian sect declined apace, and could never after recover any considerable degree of stability and consistence." — Vol. ii. p. 143.

## THE THIRD TRUMPET.

### CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 450 — 550.

Verse 10 *And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell on the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters:*

11 *And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*

The stars were declared to be the angels of the seven churches. The falling of a star denotes the falling from the truth; as, by relapsing into idolatry.

The waters of life, are the truths of the Gospel, which, when corrupted, become bitter and poisonous, causing spiritual death, or the death unto righteousness. These were poisoned by the revival of idolatrous worship.

(See Note F in the *Appendix*.)

"If before this time," says Mosheim, (fifth century), "the lustre of religion was clouded with superstition, this evil, instead of diminishing, increased daily. The happy souls of departed Christians were invoked by numbers, while none stood up to censure or oppose this preposterous worship. . . . ."

"The images of those who, during their lives, had acquired the reputation of uncommon sanctity, were now honoured with a particular worship in several places; and many imagined that this worship drew down into the images the propitious presence of the saints, or celestial beings they represented; deluded perhaps into this idle fancy by the crafty fictions of the heathen priests, who had published the same thing of the statues of Jupiter and Minerva. A singular and irresistible efficacy was also attributed to the bones of martyrs, and to the figure of the cross, in defeating the attempts of Satan, removing all sorts of calamities, and in healing not only the diseases of the body, but also those of the mind." — Vol. ii. p. 138.

The Jews particularly ceased from this time to enter into the pale of the church, in consequence of this idolatrous worship. Thus "the bitterness of the waters caused the spiritual death of many."

## THE FOURTH TRUMPET.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 450 — 550.

Verse 12 *And the fourth angel sounded; and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*

The stars symbolising the lesser, the sun and moon must be the greater lights of religion, or Christ himself and his apostles.

The light which the churches dispense to the people, they derive from the Scriptures, the medium of its conveyance to them.

History will show how this medium was darkened.

(See Note G in the Appendix.)

“For many audacious impostors were hence encouraged to publish their own writings under the names of ancient Christian worthies, and even under the sacred names of Christ himself and his apostles; that thus, in the deliberations of councils, and in the course of controversy, they might have authorities to oppose to authorities in defence of their respective opinions. *The whole Christian church was in this century (the fifth) overwhelmed* by these spurious productions, these infamous impositions.” — *Mosh.* vol. ii. p. 46.

Nor was this the only mode of darkening the lights of religion. “The greatest number of them (the ministers) reasoned and disputed concerning the truths of the Gospel, as the blind would argue about light and colours; and imagined they had acquitted themselves nobly, when they had thrown out a heap of crude and indigested notions, and overwhelmed their adversaries with a torrent of words.” — (Sixth Century.) Vol. ii. p. 128.

## CHAPTER VIII.

550 — 612.

Verse 13 *And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying, Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.*

A pause or interval is here marked between the first four and the last three trumpets. The rise of Mahommedism, which comes next into view, was the consequence of the corrupt state of religion, which has been already described.

## THE FIFTH TRUMPET.

### CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1 *And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fallen from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.*

2 *And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened, by reason of the smoke of the pit.*

3 *And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power.*

4 *And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.*

5 *And to them it was given, that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months. And their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.*

6 *And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.*

7 *And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns of gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.*

A.D. 612—762.

The corruptions of Christianity, and the revival of idolatry, opened the way to the imposture of Mahomet.

His doctrine was rendered alluring by indulging the passions, and gratifying ambition; and was ushered in by falsifying Scripture, in a pretended new revelation, the Koran.

Like a locust swarm, the Saracens issued from Arabia, spreading their fanaticism wherever the state of religion favoured its reception.

The true servants of God, who were armed against the allurements of pleasure and ambition, were not misled by it; but only the unsealed or worldly-minded.

Five prophetic months, or 150 years, their conquests and fanaticism spread together. They tolerated Christianity, but seduced into apostacy, and thereby excited the stings of conscience.

Those who, from worldly motives, were tempted to apostatize, wished to disbelieve Christianity, but conscience forbade them. Its seeds, once sown in the mind, could not be eradicated at pleasure.

Mahomet avowedly propagated religion by the sword, and promised paradise (the crown of martyrdom), to those who fell in his cause. His doctrine, professing the extirpation of idolatry, wore an imposing and manly aspect.

8 *And they had hair, as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.*

9 *And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.*

10 *And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months.*

11 *And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.*

12 *One wo is past, and behold there come two more woes hereafter.*

The indulgence of the passions rendered it alluring (long hair emblematic of allurements), while its real object was to devour and destroy (teeth as of lions).

The Saracens were alike armed for controversy and for battle, with the Koran and the sword. One was their breastplate in argument, the other gave them victory in war.

The tail, as the noxious part, denotes their poisonous doctrine, by which they prevailed as much as by the sword. Their doctrine and dominion kept pace together for 150 years.

However religion might be the ostensible object of their fanaticism, the real motive, with their leaders at least, was ambition, or devastation, and dominion, as the name imports.

(See Note H in the Appendix.)

That Mahommedism owed its rise to the darkness and ignorance which enveloped the Christian world, and to the corruptions which disfigured the pure religion of Jesus, historians are agreed. While the former favoured his attempt, the latter furnished the impostor with a plea. Since the world had disregarded the precepts of Moses and of Christ, and revived idolatry, he announced, that Heaven in its anger had sent Mahomet to extirpate it with the sword.

Mosheim thus speaks of the rise of Mahommedism, and the state of Christianity, that favoured its introduction, and promoted its success :

“ His law was artfully and wonderfully adapted to the corrupt nature of man, and more especially, to the manners and opinions of the Eastern nations, and the vices to which

they were naturally addicted; for the articles of faith which it proposed were few in number, and extremely simple; and the duties it required, were neither many nor difficult, nor such as were incompatible with the empire of the appetites and passions. It is to be observed farther, that the gross ignorance under which the Arabians, Syrians, Persians, and the greatest part of the Eastern nations laboured at this time, rendered many an easy prey to the artifice and eloquence of this bold adventurer. To these causes may be added, the bitter dissensions and cruel animosities that reigned among the Christian sects, particularly the Greeks, Nestorians, Eutychians, and Monophysites; dissensions that filled a great part of the East with carnage, assassinations, and such detestable enormities, as rendered the very name of Christian odious to many." — Vol. ii. p. 161.

The progress of Mahommedism is thus related by him: "But a new and most powerful enemy to the Christian cause started up in Arabia (A.D. 612) under the reign of Heraclius. This was Mahomet, an illiterate man, but endowed by nature with the most flowing and attractive eloquence, and with a vast and penetrating genius, distinguished also by the advantages he enjoyed from the place of his birth, which added lustre to his name and undertakings. This adventurous impostor publicly declared that he was commissioned by God to destroy polytheism and idolatry, and to reform, first, the religion of the Arabians, and afterwards the Jewish and Christian worship. For these purposes he delivered a new law, the Koran; and having gained several victories over his enemies, he compelled an incredible number of persons, both in Arabia and the neighbouring nations, to receive his doctrine, and range themselves under his standard. Elated with this rapid and unexpected success, he greatly extended his ambitious views, and formed the vast and arduous project of founding an empire. Here again success crowned his adventurous efforts; and his plan was executed with such intrepidity and impudence, that he died master of all Arabia, besides several adjacent provinces." — Vol. ii. p. 157.

The progress of his successors is thus stated by Gibbon: "One hundred years after the flight from Mecca, the arms

and reign of his successors extended from India to the Atlantic Ocean, comprising Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain." — *Gibbon*, ch. 51.

Fifty years later, or at the end of the five prophetic months in the year 762, he thus describes the altered character of the Arabs at the time when Almansor built the city of Bagdad, and called it the City of Peace. "The luxury of the caliphs, so useless to their private happiness, relaxed the nerves, and terminated the progress of the Arabian empire. Temporal and spiritual conquest had been the sole occupation of the first successors of Mahomet; and after supplying themselves with the necessaries of life, the whole revenue was scrupulously devoted to that salutary work. The Abbassides were impoverished by the multitude of their wants, and their contempt of economy. Instead of pursuing the great object of ambition, their leisure, their affections, the powers of their mind, were diverted by pomp and pleasure; the rewards of valour were embezzled by women and eunuchs; and the royal camp was encumbered by the luxury of the palace. A similar temper was diffused among the subjects of the caliph. Their stern enthusiasm was softened by time and prosperity; they sought riches in the occupations of industry, fame in the pursuits of literature, and happiness in the tranquillity of domestic life. War was no longer the passion of the Saracens; the increase of pay, and the repetitions of donatives, were insufficient to allure the posterity of those voluntary champions who had crowded to the standard of Abubeker and Omar for the hopes of spoil and of paradise" — *Gibbon*, ch. 52.

## THE SIXTH TRUMPET.

## CHAPTER IX.

A.D. 762 — 1844.

Ver. 1314 *And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels, which are bound in the great river Euphrates.*

15 *And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.*

16 *And the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them.*

17 *And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.*

18 *By these three were the third part of men killed, by the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.*

19 *For their power is in their mouths, and in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.*

20 *And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can hear, nor see, nor walk.*

21 *Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*

The Saracens paved the way for other Mahomedan invaders. These, after four distinct periods of attack, from their first settlement on the Euphrates, finally subjugated the Greek empire, in 1453.

This term, 391 years, if the appointed period of Mahomedan dominion over the Greek empire, will extend from its extinction in 1453 to 1844.

A number so great bespeaks either a succession of attacks, or a figurative allusion to their spiritual warfare.

The horses differ from the locusts; having the entire heads, not merely the teeth, of lions. They want the faces of men, and hair of women, that is, they prevail by force more than by persuasion or allurements.

The fire, smoke, and brimstone, denote the same deadly and infernal doctrines common to both.

The indulgence of the passions renders these doctrines inviting, and most fatal to the life which is in Christ.

The horses kill; the locusts tormented only. The seeds of Christianity, once sown in the mind, could not be at once eradicated. Under the Turks those seeds ceased to be sown. The Gospel was banished; the Koran alone remained.

Those who retained the Christian faith continued in the practice of idolatry as before.



The fanaticism of the Mahomedans had rather abated, and the parts of their now divided empire began to resume the character of settled nations, and ceased to swarm like locusts; yet the spirit of conquest remained, and their past success opened the way to farther attempts on the Greek empire. The first of these, which were just four in number, occurred at the period which we have now reached, and is thus noticed by Mosheim. "But the troubles of the empire, and the calamities of the church, did not end here: for, about the middle of this century (the eighth), they were assailed by new enemies, more fierce and inhuman than those whose usurpations they had hitherto suffered. These were the Turks, a tribe of the Tartars, or at least their descendants, who, breaking forth from the inaccessible wilds about Mount Caucasus, overspread Colchis, Iberia, and Albania; rushed into Armenia; and, after having subdued the Saracens, turned their victorious arms against the Greeks, whom, in process of time, they reduced under their dominion."—*Mosh.* (Eighth Cent.) vol. ii. p. 214.

After this attack, under the Abbassidan dynasty, in the eighth century, had stripped the empire of some of its fairest provinces, the progress of the Mahomedan arms was checked by their own internal dissensions, till the eleventh century, when Armenia, Georgia, and Anatolia, were wrested from it by the Seljukian dynasty. In the thirteenth century, the Mogul Tartars, under the dynasty of Zingis Khan, eradicated the remains of Christianity left by the Saracens in those parts of the East over which their devastation and dominion extended. And, finally, the Greek empire was overthrown and abolished in the fifteenth century, under the Ottoman dynasty, by Mahomed II., A.D. 1453.

The final extinction of Christianity in the East is thus noticed by Mosheim: "In the vast regions of the Eastern world, Christianity daily lost ground; and the Moslems, whether Turks or Tartars, united their barbarous efforts to extinguish its bright and salutary lustre. Asiatic Tartary, Mogolestan, Tangut, and the adjacent provinces, where the religion of Jesus had long flourished, were now become the dismal seats of superstition, under its vilest forms."—Vol. iii. p. 389.

## THE FIRST TRUMPET.

### CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 350 — 450.

Verse 6 *And the seven angels, which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.*

The visitations announced as falling on different parts of the natural world figuratively apply to the moral world.

7 *And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood; and they were cast upon the land; and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*

Trees and grass signify converts of religion; "all flesh is grass;" green grass, "the gaily flourishing." Hail, fire, and blood, denote storms of strife and contention. History will best explain the nature and cause of these storms.

(See Note E in the Appendix.)

The history of the fourth and fifth century is almost entirely engrossed with the contentions of the bishops and patriarchs for power and supremacy. — See *Mosheim*. "For, in proportion as the bishops multiplied their privileges, and extended their usurpations, the patriarchs gained new accessions of power, by the despotism which they exercised over the episcopal order. They fomented also divisions among the bishops, and excited animosities between them and the other members of the church. They went still farther, and sowed the seeds of discord between the clergy and the people, that all these combustions might furnish them with perpetual matter for the exercise of their authority, and procure them a multitude of clients and dependants. . . . .

"To these lamentable evils were added, the ambitious quarrels and the bitter animosities of the patriarchs themselves, which produced the most bloody wars, and the most detestable and horrid crimes. . . . .

"The attentive inquirer into the affairs of the church from this period, will find . . . . . that these ignominious schisms flowed chiefly from the unchristian contention for dominion and supremacy which reigned among those who set themselves up for the fathers and defenders of the church." — *Mosheim*, vol. ii. p. 27.

## THE SECOND TRUMPET.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 350 — 450.

Verse 8 *And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood;*

In scriptural language, the Christian religion is called Mount Sion, and the Jewish Mount Sinai. Fire is the emblem of strife; thus a burning mountain symbolizes religious controversy.

9 *And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died, and the third part of the ships was destroyed.*

Life is the life in Christ. Ships mean inhabitants, not literally ships; "howl, ye ships of Tarshish." — *Isaiah*, xxiii. 1.

History furnishes no event that can be more aptly symbolized by the burning mountain than the Trinitarian controversy, which occurred at this period, as Mosheim informs us, and for two centuries without intermission engaged the whole Christian world.

"The subject of this fatal controversy, which kindled such deplorable divisions throughout the Christian world, was the doctrine of Three Persons in the Godhead; a doctrine which, in the three preceding centuries, had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas." — *Mosh.* vol. i. p. 411.

This controversy (the most momentous that ever divided the Christian world, and which, besides its pernicious influence on religion, has actually caused more bloodshed than the subversion of the Roman empire), arose in the fourth century, gained entire possession of men's minds in the fifth, and raged with unremitting fury till the middle of the sixth, when it abated, according to Mosheim. "Whether this change was produced by the force of reason and argument, or by the influence of hopes and fears, we shall not pretend to determine. One thing however is certain, that from this period the Arian sect declined apace, and could never after recover any considerable degree of stability and consistence." — Vol. ii. p. 143.

## THE THIRD TRUMPET.

### CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 450 — 550.

Verse 10 *And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell on the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters :*

11 *And the name of the star is called Wormwood : and the third part of the waters became wormwood ; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*

The stars were declared to be the angels of the seven churches. The falling of a star denotes the falling from the truth ; as, by relapsing into idolatry.

The waters of life, are the truths of the Gospel, which, when corrupted, become bitter and poisonous, causing spiritual death, or the death unto righteousness. These were poisoned by the revival of idolatrous worship.

(See Note F in the Appendix.)

“ If before this time,” says Mosheim, (fifth century), “ the lustre of religion was clouded with superstition, this evil, instead of diminishing, increased daily. The happy souls of departed Christians were invoked by numbers, while none stood up to censure or oppose this preposterous worship. . . . .

“ The images of those who, during their lives, had acquired the reputation of uncommon sanctity, were now honoured with a particular worship in several places ; and many imagined that this worship drew down into the images the propitious presence of the saints, or celestial beings they represented ; deluded perhaps into this idle fancy by the crafty fictions of the heathen priests, who had published the same thing of the statues of Jupiter and Minerva. A singular and irresistible efficacy was also attributed to the bones of martyrs, and to the figure of the cross, in defeating the attempts of Satan, removing all sorts of calamities, and in healing not only the diseases of the body, but also those of the mind.” — Vol. ii. p. 138.

The Jews particularly ceased from this time to enter into the pale of the church, in consequence of this idolatrous worship. Thus “ the bitterness of the waters caused the spiritual death of many.”

## THE FOURTH TRUMPET.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 450 — 550.

Verse 12 *And the fourth angel sounded; and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*

The stars symbolising the lesser, the sun and moon must be the greater lights of religion, or Christ himself and his apostles.

The light which the churches dispense to the people, they derive from the Scriptures, the medium of its conveyance to them.

History will show how this medium was darkened.

(See Note G in the Appendix.)

“For many audacious impostors were hence encouraged to publish their own writings under the names of ancient Christian worthies, and even under the sacred names of Christ himself and his apostles; that thus, in the deliberations of councils, and in the course of controversy, they might have authorities to oppose to authorities in defence of their respective opinions. *The whole Christian church was in this century (the fifth) overwhelmed by these spurious productions, these infamous impositions.*” — *Mosh.* vol. ii. p. 46.

Nor was this the only mode of darkening the lights of religion. “The greatest number of them (the ministers) reasoned and disputed concerning the truths of the Gospel, as the blind would argue about light and colours; and imagined they had acquitted themselves nobly, when they had thrown out a heap of crude and indigested notions, and overwhelmed their adversaries with a torrent of words.” — (Sixth Century.) Vol. ii. p. 128.

## CHAPTER VIII.

550 — 612.

Verse 13 *And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying, Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.*

A pause or interval is here marked between the first four and the last three trumpets. The rise of Mahommedism, which comes next into view, was the consequence of the corrupt state of religion, which has been already described.

*which spiritually is called Sodom or Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

9 *And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.*

10 *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.*

11 *And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*

12 *And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.*

13 *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

14 *The second wo is past, and behold the third wo cometh quickly.*

*(See Note K in the Appendix.)*

These 1260 years of impure worship in the West, are contemporaneous with a similar period already noticed in the East. If computed from the year 606, which seems to be most distinctly marked as the commencement of the papal hierarchy, it will terminate in 1866, by adding 1260 years: whereas the Eastern apostacy appeared destined to prevail from 612 to 1844. Thus the two will be almost exactly contemporaneous.

fore the reformation; but the dead bodies were not seen by the people until the frauds were detected and exposed.

This was done by Luther, who opened the eyes of the people in 1517, in Germany, which was a street of the great city, the Roman Empire.

The worldly-minded rejoiced in the exposure of these frauds, not for religion's sake, but thinking it would perish along with superstition and priestcraft.

But their triumph was of short duration, for in 1521, Luther translated the Gospels into German; his translation was received with avidity; and the witnesses came to life.

The new translation was soon generally diffused; and, perpetuated by the art of printing, then recently discovered, was effectually secured from any future attempts of its enemies.

"The effect," says Mosheim, "was prodigious." Whole nations threw off the papal yoke. Many who before worshipped the god of the earth, afterwards gave glory to the God of heaven:

Archdeacon Woodhouse thus notices the period here adverted to: "Fixing our attention on the period of history to which we seem directed, we cannot but remark a long succession of ages, commencing with the times when the Western Gentiles flowed into the church, and possessed the outer courts of the temple: when on their ignorance and superstition a corrupt and ambitious clergy began to raise the papal hierarchy, substituting pagan ceremonies and unauthorized observances in the room of primitive religion. These in history are called the middle ages, intervening between the bright period of Grecian and Roman literature, and the restoration of learning in the fourteenth century; between the days of primitive Christian knowledge, and the return of it at the reformation." — Page 296.

Speaking of the reformation, he observes as follows: "The rulers of the darkness of this world had then apparently extinguished the light of evangelical religion: but while they were enjoying their triumph, the holy light rekindles; it rises as it were from the dead. By Luther, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Calvin, and their followers, the Gospel of Christ is produced to the world; is perpetuated by the art of printing; becomes the rule of worship and duty, and points the true way to heaven." — *Woodhouse*, p. 300.

That the witnesses mean the prophets of the Old and New Testament, may derive some support from the following observation by the translator of Mosheim: "When asked by the papists where our religion was before Luther? we generally answer, 'In the Bible,' and we answer well," &c. It may truly be said, that the two bodies of evidence contained in the Old and New Testament, are "twin pillars of Christian faith, resting on the one pedestal of truth, and crowned with the one capital of human salvation."

The witnesses are generally understood to be the protestant churches, but some difficulties attend this interpretation. It is not improbable that there might always be some scattered individuals who retained the true faith and pure religion of Jesus: but it is certain there was in Europe no particular sect or church, which has at all times professed Christianity in its original purity. But the Scriptures have always confronted Antichrist, as it were, and

borne testimony to the truth ; although their light was long clouded by ignorance and superstition, and purposely withheld by a designing priesthood ; as if conscious that this testimony pronounced their own condemnation.

This figurative interpretation, in allusion to their withholding the light of the Gospel from the people, seems in many respects more applicable than the literal, as referring to the suffering of any particular sect or church : for instance, the witnesses ' devouring their enemies with the fire of their mouths ;' ' their shutting heaven that it rain not ;' ' their visiting the earth with all plagues,' are phrases more applicable to the Scriptures than to the persecuted church. Nor could the church be said to stand before the god of the earth, here supposed to mean Antichrist, in opposition to the God of heaven. But this is offered merely as a conjecture ; for it appears in the original, that the word used is in some editions *Κυριος*, and in others *Θεος*. To the Scriptures, however, all these characteristics appear perfectly applicable, but not to any church.

With the proposed explanation of the death and resurrection of the witnesses, the writer acknowledges that he is far from satisfied, although it was thought right to submit it to the consideration of the reader. Upon more mature reflection, he is disposed to agree with Archdeacon Woodhouse and Bishop Newton, that these parts of the prophecy may be still future, and may yet receive a more satisfactory solution. His reason for this opinion chiefly rests on the following ground ; namely, that we cannot, without giving up the consistency of the metaphor, suppose the witnesses to have been slain, to have risen again, and to have ascended into heaven ; and after their ascension, suppose them to be still prophesying in sackcloth on earth. But if the period of their prophesying extend to the end of the 1260 years, as it is declared, these have not yet terminated, and the conclusion therefore is inevitable, that they have not yet ascended into the symbolical heaven.



## THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

### CHAPTER XI.

Verse 15 *And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

16 *And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,*

17 *Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*

18 *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*

19 *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

A.D. 1521 — 1866.

At the sounding of this trumpet it is declared, that the kingdom of Christ shall be restored. The overthrow of Antichrist, and the re-establishment of true religion, are accordingly now about to be developed.

But the account of Antichrist's overthrow is prefaced by a minute description, in the following chapter, of his character and empire in the West.

The same metaphors and the same expressions, here used to announce the downfall of Antichrist, were formerly employed in foretelling the subversion of true religion.

The wrath of the Lamb, and the resurrection of the dead, taken literally, apply to the day of judgment; but figuratively, announce the destruction of Antichrist. Not the resurrection of the literally dead, but the restoration of the life which is in Christ is signified.

The opening of the temple, and displaying the ark of the covenant, manifestly imply the establishment of true Christianity, resulting from the restoration and general diffusion of the Gospel.

The following remarks are made by Archdeacon Woodhouse: " ' The time of the dead ' may likewise signify (in that metaphorical sense in which the word ' death,' &c. is frequently used), the time when pure religion, dead and buried, as it had been with the witnesses, shall revive and flourish.

..... ' The ark of the covenant,' (the sacred coffer so called, because it contained the tables of the

covenant, into which God had deigned to enter with the ancient church), was deposited in the 'tabernacle called the Holiest of All.' This interior part of the temple, accessible under the law to none but the high priest, is now opened; and the ark is exhibited to view. Jesus Christ, the only High Priest, and Mediator of the new covenant, who had here deposited his new covenant of mercy, even the everlasting Gospel; who had broken down the partition excluding the Gentiles from its benefits; who alone could enter the holy of holies; grants it to be exhibited. As the walls of the idolatrous Jericho fell before the ark of the Old Testament, so will the corrupt Babylon before this. But that which seems more immediately to be signified under this exhibition, is the *restoration of the Gospel*; of the Christian religion in its purity. The Gentiles, from the entrance of the greater part of them into the church, had not yet enjoyed the opportunity of knowing and practising a pure religion. They had trodden the courts, but had never been admitted into the interior of the temple. From the period of the reformation, a view of the ark of the covenant was offered them."—*Woodhouse*, p. 307.

. . . . . "This is only a preparatory scene, and therefore affords only a general view of the wrath of God, which is seen especially poured out in the vision of the vials, contained also under this trumpet."—*Woodhouse*, p. 308.

The two following chapters will be found to present a complete picture of the empire of Antichrist, and of its establishment on the ruins of Christianity in the West; his dominion in the East having been already described.

## THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON.

## CHAPTER XII.

A.D. 32 — 606.

Verse 1 *And a great sign was seen in heaven ; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.*

2 *And being with child, she cries out, suffering the pangs of childbirth, and painfully labouring to bring forth.*

3 *And there was seen another sign in heaven ; and behold a great fire-coloured dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems.*

4 *And his tail draweth along the third part of the stars of heaven, and he cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, that when she should bring forth he might devour her child.*

5 *And she brought forth a male child, who is about to rule as a shepherd all nations with an iron rod. And her child was caught up to God, and to his throne.*

6 *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that they should nourish her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

7 *And there was a war in heaven, Michael and his angels for to fight with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels.*

Judaism was parent to Christianity, and before it the only pure religion ; adorned with the heavenly luminaries, emblems of light and truth.

The allegorical birth typifies the establishment, not the promulgation of Christianity. The labour pains denote the struggle preceding its establishment.

The dragon personifies the passions and worldly propensities of man, warring against true religion. His instrument is paganism ; his seat the Roman empire, figuratively called " the earth."

His tail, the most noxious part, denoting evil propensities, prevents many of the Jews from embracing Christianity ; and, after it is established, seeks to destroy it, by corrupting its purity. The heaven from which the stars fell, is the kingdom of Christ.

The birth was effected in the fourth century, when Christianity was firmly established ; but its purity was already corrupted, and it was caught up to heaven, or disappeared from the earth soon after.

From the seventh century, the conversion of the Jews entirely ceased ; at which time they became an object of persecution to the Romish church, and have continued so ever since.

The warfare of the dragon is synonymous with the labour pains, or the struggle between Christianity and paganism ;

8 *And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.*

9 *And the great red dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels with him.*

10 *And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the rule of his anointed; because the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night.*

11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death."*

12 *Therefore rejoice, O ye heavens, and ye that dwell therein. Wo to the earth, and to the sea; because the devil is come down to you having great wrath, knowing that he hath a short season.*

13 *And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he pursued the woman who brought forth the male child.*

14 *And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might flee into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished a time and times and half a time from the face of the serpent.*

15 *And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water like a flood, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.*

16 *And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed up the river*

In which Christianity prevailed, and paganism was abolished.

The dragon was thus deprived of an instrument by which he had deceived the whole world, idolatry having prevailed in every nation.

The abolition of paganism laid the foundation for the establishment of Christianity; and therefore this event is announced as the commencement of the kingdom of Christ with corresponding triumph and exultation.

True Christianity survived pagan persecution, by the force of truth, and the constancy of the martyrs.

The dragon, deprived of power to hurt the true Christian, next assails the worldly-minded, and, by seduction, revives idolatry in the Roman empire, or the figurative earth.

The Jews ceased to embrace Christianity when it became idolatrous, and were persecuted by the church of Rome in consequence.

But their dispersed state, and the division of the empire, favoured their escape; and they are to continue dispersed to the end of the 1260 years.

An overwhelming flood signifies worldly power, which the dragon employed against the Jews; seduction rather than force against the Christians.

Nor did the Jews fail to find protection from the worldly policy of several states and

*which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*

*17 And the dragon was enraged against the woman, and went away to make war with the remnant of her offspring, those who keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus.*

princes, who derived advantage from their wealth and knowledge of traffic.

Enraged against the mother which gave birth to the male child, or true Christianity, now caught up to heaven, or placed beyond his reach, the dragon pursues his warfare against the remaining offspring (also Christians), by the means described in the next chapter.

Archdeacon Woodhouse considers the woman to be the true church of Christ; the male child, the Messiah; and the remnant of the woman's offspring, the scattered and persecuted Christians. But we cannot well connect a symbolical woman with a literal child; the nature of the offspring must surely accord with that of its parent. Others again consider the male child also as the Christian church; but their explanation identifies all the three symbols; thus the woman is the true church, the male child is the true church, and the remnant of her offspring are the true church; three symbols which are yet used as distinct and separate, even after the allegorical parturition. The view here offered may perhaps obviate some of the difficulties; but being, as the writer believes, unsanctioned by authority, it is proposed with diffidence.

If we consider the "mother" to symbolize Judaism, or the Jewish church, which was certainly parent to the Christian, then will the male child be true Christianity; and the allegorical birth, as borrowed from Bishop Newton, will signify, not the promulgation, but the establishment of Christianity by authority, and the end of the labour pains, from the cessation of pagan persecution. During the intervening period between the promulgation and establishment, corresponding to the figurative time of gestation, the mother and child were in conjunction, for the two religions were united. Not indeed that portion of the Jewish church which crucified and rejected the Messiah, and were rejected by him—these were in no sense related to Christianity,—but those only who laboured to establish it by propagating the Gospel; these were the true parent, and Jews in reality, the

others in name only, really the synagogue of Satan: and farther, the Gentile converts are styled Israelites by adoption.

After the allegorical birth, the male child was caught up to heaven, to God's throne; by which is here understood, not, as Bishop Newton explains it, that "it was advanced to the imperial throne," an advancement nearly fatal to true religion, which therefore cannot be symbolized by its being caught up to heaven; but that the purity of Christianity, being previously corrupted, soon disappeared altogether from the Roman Empire, the symbolical earth,—and was saved from perishing by divine protection alone. The flight of the woman into the wilderness, which followed shortly after, may perhaps be explained by the account given by Mosheim, that the Jews, from the end of the sixth century, when idolatry had been revived in the church, ceased to become converts to Christianity; a fact which their rooted aversion for idolatry sufficiently accounts for. In consequence of this, they became in all catholic countries, and have never since ceased to be, an object of persecution to the Romish church; which, as Mosheim says, employed force when persuasion failed. Here then we have the flood poured out by the serpent to overwhelm the woman. But the earth helped her, and swallowed up the flood; which may signify, that in the many nations subject to the beast, some one or other had always afforded them a refuge; for the worldly interests of the princes to whom their wealth and knowledge of commerce rendered them useful, contributed to procure them protection.

The warfare of Michael against the dragon must for several reasons allude to the struggle of Christianity against paganism, and not against papacy; for this conflict precedes the allegorical birth, and the flight of the woman; the narrative returning to this point when the conflict ends. Michael, who is the tutelary angel of the Jews, conducts this warfare; showing that Judaism and Christianity were at this time united. The conflict was carried on in the figurative heaven, that is, before the purity of Christianity had wholly disappeared. The horns of the dragon were not yet crowned; showing that his empire was not at this time divided into ten kingdoms. All these concur to prove that pagan and not papal Rome is the adversary of Christianity in this warfare.

The woman's flight, and the dragon's pursuit, may leave more room for doubt. At first sight, the inundation of the Roman Empire by the barbarians, and the subsequent conversion of these (for the most part) pagan conquerors to Christianity, appears to afford a more satisfactory solution of the flood poured out by the dragon, and swallowed up by the earth. But if this inundation of the barbarians may be said to have driven the woman into the wilderness, which is not very clear\*, yet, being only temporary in its operation, this cannot be assigned as a permanent cause for her remaining there for the whole 1260 years, as it is expressly said, "to shelter herself from the face of the serpent." But if the woman be the Jewish church, the wide world will then be the wilderness; and such it has truly been, to an outcast and persecuted race, who wander over the face of the earth, and find no resting place. Such it has been to them, and such it was "prepared for them;" for prophecy had expressly declared that they should remain in this state, a persecuted and wandering people, until the appointed time for their restoration should arrive. Two points yet remain to be noticed, which are, the eagle's wings given to the woman, and her being destined to receive nourishment during the period of her sojourn in the wilderness. Her being destined to receive nourishment during the 1260 years, must, upon the view here proposed, signify, that notwithstanding the dispersion of the Jews amongst, and their mixture with other nations, they should not be allowed to perish, but should still be miraculously supported, and remain as a separate and distinct people through the whole period of the dominion of the beast.

And the eagle's wings given to the woman will, upon the same view, denote the great extent of their dispersion, and the means of escape which should be afforded to them.

Who are the remnant of the woman's offspring, and the object of the dragon's further hostility, will be seen hereafter.

\* (See Note L in the *Appendix*.)

## THE TEN HORNED BEAST OF THE SEA.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 1 *And I was stationed on the sand of the sea, and I saw a wild beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and upon his horns diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy.*

2 *And the wild beast which I saw was like a leopard; and his feet as those of a bear; and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority.*

3 *And I saw one of his heads as having been smitten unto death, and his deadly wound was healed. And the whole earth wondered after the wild beast.*

4 *And they worshipped the dragon because he had given the power to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast, and who is able to make war with him?*

5 *And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and there was given to him power (to continue in action) forty two months.*

6 *And he opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.*

7 *And it was given him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. And power was*

A. D. 606 — 1866.

The sea signifies the Western Gentiles; the beast an idolatrous tyrannical empire; his horns are the kingdoms composing that empire; his heads are seven successive forms of government ruling over the empire.

The form and agility of the leopard, the grasp of the bear, and the bite of the lion, express the power and influence of the beast. They are derived from the devil, or founded on worldly interest; and Rome is the seat of the beast.

One head appeared to be slain when paganism was abolished; but it revived, and recovered the character of a beast, when idolatry was re-established.

Worshipping the devil consists in the indulgence of the passions, and the exclusive pursuit of worldly interests. For these, men worshipped the beast also, or embraced his principles, and supported his empire.

Blasphemies in prophetic language signify apostacy. (*See Acts, xxvi. 11*). Forty-two months is the same period as 1260 days.

The figurative heaven, or Christ's kingdom upon earth, was blasphemed by apostacy and the relapse into idolatry.

To vanquish in this spiritual warfare, is to seduce into idolatry. The saints, or the pious, are not



*given to him over every tribe and people, and language, and nation.*

8 *And all who dwell on the earth shall worship him; they whose name is not written in the book of life of the Lamb, which was sacrificed from the foundation of the world.*

9 *If any one have an ear, let him hear.*

10 *If any one leadeth into captivity, into captivity he goes. If any one shall slay with the sword, he must be slain with the sword. Herein is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

proof against this seduction. Their very zeal, if without knowledge, may help to blind and mislead them.

The power of this idolatrous empire is to extend over all the Western nations; but not over every individual. Some in every age have recognised the marks of the beast, and resisted the seduction of the dragon. These are not overcome by him.

Let those who are capable of understanding learn from this,

that bigotry and persecution are inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity; that patience and forbearance mark the true Christian character.

The heads and horns of the beast are afterwards explained in the prophecy itself, as here interpreted. The five first heads are thus enumerated by Livy and Tacitus: 1st, Kings; 2d, Consuls; 3d, Dictators; 4th, Decemvirs; 5th, Military Tribunes with consular authority; the 6th, or Augustan Emperors, was in being when the prophet wrote; and the 7th appears from the arguments of Mr. Faber to be the Feudal Elective Emperors, founded by Charlemagne.

Archdeacon Woodhouse and Mr. Faber agree in considering the deadly wound of the sixth head to mean the loss of its attributes as a beast, when the Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity; and the revival of this head to signify the recovery of those attributes, when the empire relapsed into idolatry.

The horns, symbols of power, and expressly declared to represent ten kingdoms, into which the Roman Empire, entire and unbroken at the time of the prophecy, was to be subsequently divided, are enumerated by an unexceptionable witness, Machiavel, as follows: 1. The Ostrogoths; 2. The Visigoths; 3. The Sueves and Alans; 4. The Vandals; 5. The Franks; 6. The Burgundians; 7. The Heruli and Thuringi; 8. The Saxons and Angles; 9. The Huns; 10. The

**Lombards.** The Western Empire was divided into these about the fifth century; but, as Mr. Clarke observes, in his ingenious and learned work on the Dragon and the Beast, these may be the horns of the dragon, or his seat the Pagan Empire, but they were not the ten kingdoms composing the Christian or the Latin Empire, which gave their power to the beast; nor were they the ten kings afterwards spoken of as hating the whore, and making her desolate. These must be sought for among the states of Europe at the commencement of the reformation, and will be as follow: France, Spain, England, Scotland, The Empire, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, Portugal.

We have now to inquire who are the remnant of the woman's offspring, and what is the nature of the warfare carried on against them by the beast. It is evident that literal war, for political purposes, cannot here be meant. It is still the warfare of the dragon, or the evil propensities of man personified, against true religion, or against those who keep the commandments of God; and its purpose is to withdraw them from their allegiance. It is in fact a continuance of the war before carried on by the dragon, through the instrumentality of paganism; in which being foiled, he now raises up another instrument, the beast, and strives to prevail by other means, or by adding the allurements of temporal advantages to the terrors of persecution. The date of this new mode of attack, is from the abolition of paganism, or the conversion of Constantine; when Christianity first began to offer worldly advantages. Its objects are those who hold the testimony of Jesus; that is, they are Christians in name at least. The term "saints" is even applied to those who are vanquished for a time; piety and devotion cannot therefore be denied to them. But these qualifications, it seems, are not alone sufficient to secure their possessors from defeat; for all are said to be overcome whose names are not written in the Book of Life. Those indeed who possess zeal alone, without knowledge, are naturally most prone to bigotry and superstition, and thus most liable to be misled by the delusions of the dragon. And accordingly, fanaticism has at all times prevailed among, and persecution been esteemed a duty with, most of the followers of the beast. These errors have not, however, been confined to the Romish church, but

have extended also to the protestants, who have not always let slip the opportunity for retaliation : hence the necessity for that exhortation to patience and forbearance, equally applicable to both, contained in verse 10th.

This circumstance it is important to notice, not only to guard against the illiberal prejudice which leads us to consider our own church as the peculiar favourite of Heaven, and another as the exclusive object of its wrath, but it is further essential to the right understanding of the subject before us. For this single fact, this spirit of retaliation, is alone sufficient to prove, that neither party at this time possessed the genuine Christian spirit. In neither of these do we discover the male child, or true Christianity, which was caught up to heaven.

The remnant of the woman's offspring must therefore mean those who, from the fourth century, continued to profess Christianity, in name at least, but were afterwards, for the most part, seduced or overcome by the beast ; while the true servants of God, who were sealed in their foreheads, cannot at this time designate any particular church, but merely those scattered individuals, through all ages and nations, who, having imbibed the true spirit of Christianity, have thereby been enabled to resist alike the contagion of example, the allurements of worldly advantages, and the dread of persecution.

## THE TWO-HORNED BEAST OF THE LAND.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 11 *And I beheld another wild beast coming up out of the land, and he had two horns as a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*

12 *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him; and causeth the earth, and those who dwell therein, to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed.*

13 *And he doeth great wonders, in order that he may make fire come down from heaven upon earth, in the sight of men.*

14 *And he deceiteth those who dwell on the earth, by the wonders which he doeth before the beast; saying to those who dwell on the earth, to make an image to the beast, who hath the wound of the sword and did live.*

15 *And it was given to him to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should even speak; and he should cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.*

16 *And he causeth all, both the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free-men, and the slaves, that they should receive a mark upon their right hands, or upon their forehead.*

17 *And that no one might be able to buy or sell, but he who hath the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

A.D. 606 — 1866.

The Romish ecclesiastical empire; nominally Christian, really Antichristian. Supported by two orders of clergy, monks and priests.

The power of the church, and that of the empire, one in spiritual, the other in temporal concerns, mutually supporting each other, concurred in the revival of false religion and idolatry.

The church professes to call down divine vengeance on its enemies; and does so in the estimation of its followers.

The pretence to miraculous powers was used to impress this belief; and the influence thus obtained was employed to support the power of the pope; who is the idol of the church, and image of the emperor, or emperor in spiritual matters.

The voice of the pope was believed to have power either to forgive sins, or consign to eternal perdition. The anathemas of the church could once loosen the bonds of society, or dethrone princes.

Those who profess the Romish faith, are distinguished by their mode of making the sign of the cross; beginning with the right hand directed to the forehead.

Any deviation from this betrayed a heretic; and to such the privileges of traffic were denied at one time in all catholic countries.

18 *Herein is the wisdom, let him that hath understanding, calculate the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.*

Ἡ Λατίνη Βασιλεία,  
The Latin Kingdom, or Romish church, answers the description, and makes the number 666.

The former beast arose out of the sea, the present rises out of the land; a distinction applied to the Jews and the Gentiles before their conversion; but how does it apply afterwards? is now the question. In the corrupt state of the church here spoken of, it is to be supposed, that each class of these nominal converts would retain their previous characteristics after professing Christianity. Now the Gentiles had been addicted to idolatry; and the Jews had rejected the promised Messiah through worldly-mindedness, and the expectation of a temporal prince; and to these propensities the distinction may still allude. Accordingly, under the First Trumpet, the hail storm, signifying the contention for worldly power and supremacy, was announced as falling on the *land*, as if affecting those addicted to the Jewish love of temporal power. Whereas, under the Second Trumpet, the burning mountain, denoting the controversy about the plurality of persons in the Godhead, is said to be cast into the *sea*; as if falling upon the Gentiles, from their proneness to polytheism.

So in the present instance, the ten-horned beast arises out of the *sea*, his empire extending over the Gentile nations of the West: whereas the two-horned beast arises out of the *land*, the papal hierarchy deriving its origin from the Jewish love of worldly pomp and supremacy.

Horns are symbols of power. The power of an empire arises out of the nations composing it. But a spiritual empire derives its power not from territory, but from opinion; and the influence of the church on public opinion is supported by its clergy. In the Romish church, the clergy is divided into two distinct branches, the regular and secular, or the monks and the priests. These are its horns, or the sources of its power.

For the mode of computing the number of the beast in the Greek language, in which the prophecy was written,

(See Note M in the Appendix.)

## THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST, AND RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER XIV.

*Verse 1 And I looked, and lo the Lamb standing on the mountain Sion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written upon their foreheads.*

*2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard as of harpers playing on their harps.*

*3 And they sing, as it were, a new song, before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one was able to learn the song, except the hundred and forty-four thousand, the redeemed of the earth.*

*4 These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins; these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; these were redeemed from amongst men, a first fruit unto God, and to the Lamb;*

*5 And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are spotless.*

*6 And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel, to preach good tidings to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and tribe, and language, and people.*

*7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him who created the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the springs of waters.*

The true followers of Christ, by whom the beasts before named are to be overcome, are again brought into view; being the same as they who refused to worship the dragon or receive the mark of the beast.

The kingdom of Christ on earth, figuratively called "heaven" before the corruptions of Christianity, now re-appears, when true religion is revived.

This song, afterwards called the "song of the Lamb," intimates the affinity of the two churches; the Christian being the offspring of the Jewish religion.

They who have not been seduced into idolatry, but have retained the pure worship of God, and the true faith in Christ, through the whole period of general corruption and apostacy, sing this song.

They had not used the pretence to religion to answer worldly purposes.

Under the Romish church, the Gospel, misconstrued and perverted, had ceased to impart glad tidings, and was moreover withheld from the people; but was restored to them at the time of the reformation.

This defeat, the commencement of the beast's destruction, is only an anticipation of his final overthrow, which will be minutely described in the sequel.

The picture of Antichrist being given, the power by which he is to be overthrown, and the means of his subversion, come next into view. That power is the true church, and the Gospel is the means. In the picture of the true church, it is material to attend to one point which is never lost sight of, namely, the Jewish origin of Christianity; for this confirms the exposition given of the mother of the male child, as symbolizing Judaism. The 144,000 are the elect of Israel before noticed, while the multitude that followed were stated to be Gentiles; "salvation being to the Jew first, and afterwards to the Gentile also." The first who embraced Christianity were Jews. The Messiah was himself a Jew, and the Gentiles became Israelites by adoption. The song of the 144,000 is afterwards called the song of Moses and of the Lamb; in allusion to the connexion of the Christian with the Jewish dispensation. The Jews were the depositaries of the prophetic testimony which led to the expectation of the Messiah; and, before his advent, had the merit of professing a pure religion, when other nations were addicted to idolatry. Moreover, it must be esteemed a merit that they were the first to reject nominal Christianity when it became idolatrous; except indeed some, who, as Mosheim says, "entered the church from worldly motives, for the sake of its honours and emoluments;" and these, as we have seen, retained the same characteristic after their nominal conversion. Lastly, when, by the subversion of Antichrist, Christianity shall be purified from idolatry, the Jews will again embrace it, or the mother be reunited to her child.

As withholding the Gospel was the chief means of corrupting religion, so restoring the Gospel at the reformation was the first step towards the revival of true religion.

## DOWNFAL OF THE SPIRITUAL BABYLON.

## CHAPTER XIV

Verse 8 *And another angel followed, saying, She is fallen! Babylon, the great city, is fallen, for of the wine of the rage of her fornication she hath made all the nations to drink.*

9 *And a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any one worship the beast and his image, and receive a mark upon his forehead, or upon his hand;*

10 *Even he shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, of the embittered powerful wine, in the cup of his anger, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone before the holy angels, and before the Lamb.*

11 *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and if any one receive the mark of his name.*

12 *Herein is the patience of the saints, they who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

13 *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write; Blessed are they who die in the Lord, henceforth, even so saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, but their works follow with them.*

A general view of the downfall of the beast is now prefigured, as that of true religion had before been, in terms borrowed from the description of the day of judgment.

The evils foretold under the metaphor of divine wrath, are evidently the calamities naturally arising from the corruption of religion.

Moral evils of infernal origin, such as fanaticism and immorality, were symbolized by fire, smoke, and brimstone, under the fifth trumpet, and appear to be equally signified by the same symbols here.

The kingdom of Christ being the figurative heaven, the holy angels symbolize his followers, who will now witness the evil works of their persecutors recoiling upon themselves.

The true Christian is again encouraged, and exhorted to wait with patience, for

In the same figurative style it is here declared, as it was in the downfall of true religion, that the real Christian shall be exempt from participation in these calamities; an exemption which must be referred to spiritual evils.

From the restoration of the Gospel, the revival of true religion, and the downfall of the spiritual Babylon, may be distinctly dated. At the reformation, the usurped dominion of superstition and priestcraft was shaken to its very foundation, and from this time the power of the Romish church has



continued to decline, each succeeding age producing further abridgments of its influence and authority. Nor was this occasioned alone by the light which the Gospel diffused, but in part also by the disclosure of those frauds which had been practised by the priesthood; these together excited a general disposition to shake off their tyrannical usurpation.

An empire, however, founded upon worldly interest, supported by the indulgence of the passions, and which had so long subsisted, was not likely to fall without a struggle. Every effort would naturally be made, and every artifice be employed, to prolong the reign of Antichrist. And those who had been hitherto deluded by him, but whose eyes at length were opened, and who, in consequence, became desirous of emancipation from their thralldom, must feel the weight of that tyranny which they had helped to establish and support. The calamities attendant upon this struggle must needs fall upon those who had been the supporters of Antichrist; the true Christian can have no participation in them; whether they consist in the loss of those worldly goods which were the main object of this usurpation, in the unavailing efforts to escape from and subvert this tyranny, or in the remorse felt by those who at length become sensible of their former error and delusion in supporting it.

Of these evils a general view will be presented under the symbols of harvest and vintage, and a particular detail under the seven vials.

## THE HARVEST AND VINTAGE.

## CHAPTER XIV.

A.D. 1550 — 1866.

Verse 14 *And I looked, and lo! a white cloud; and upon the cloud one sitting, like the Son of man; having upon his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*

15 *And another angel came forth from the temple, crying with a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap; for the time of thy reaping is come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*

16 *And he who was sitting upon the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth, and the earth was reaped.*

17 *And another angel came forth from the temple in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

18 *And another angel came forth from the altar, having power over the fire; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.*

19 *And the angel cast his sickle to the earth, and gathered the grapes of the vine of the earth, and cast them into the wine-press of the wrath of God.*

20 *And the wine-press was trodden on the outside of the city; and there came forth blood from the wine-press even unto the bridles of the horses, for the space of a thousand six hundred furlongs.*

The metaphors of harvest and vintage evidently allude to the effects of religion and irreligion growing up in the mind; as elsewhere used by our Saviour.

The separation of the wheat from the tares, which had ripened together, began at the reformation; the first signal effort to emancipate the mind from the thralldom of superstition and priestcraft.

This is distinctly the harvest. The vintage follows, and is declared to be a vintage of wrath.

As the mind expanded, further efforts at emancipation naturally followed.

While corresponding efforts to perpetuate the reign of imposture and delusion produced religious warfare with its attendant horrors; denoted by the fire of the altar, and the wrath of God.

A conspicuous instance of this, and apparently alluded to here, was the French revolution; avowedly an effort of resistance to tyranny and priestcraft.

But these calamities, here intimated only in a general way, will be more minutely described under the seven vials of wrath which follow.

Of the evils resulting from a system of delusion and falsehood, one is its laying the foundation for infidelity and atheism. For, as knowledge increases, and the mind becomes

enlightened, the imposture will be detected, and none but the blindly ignorant, or the foolishly credulous, will any longer be imposed upon. But while the system of delusion thus works its own downfall, it is not to be supposed that those who once held it sacred, and never knew a more perfect religion, will, on rejecting it, select some other from among the number of those which they have hitherto despised or abhorred. The consequence to be expected is rather, that they will for a time regard every other form of religion as a system of priestcraft and imposture like their own; and thus infidelity or atheism naturally follows.

This evil has been abundantly exemplified during the last three centuries; for since the revival of learning has exposed the impositions of the Romish church, and excited resistance to its usurped authority at the reformation, we have witnessed the rise and progress of infidelity, secretly working its way, and diffusing its influence through the writings of wits, sages, and philosophers. It reached its summit at the French revolution, when an event unparalleled in history occurred, a national renunciation of the belief in God and a future state.

The next evil that results from a system of fraud and imposture, is immorality; following as a natural consequence of infidelity, which removes at once the restraints imposed both by superstition and by religion; for the worst form of religion imposes some moral restraint, and is preferable to absolute atheism. The consequence that ensues from the removal of this restraint, is to loosen the bonds of social order; and as these evils have been coexistent, namely, infidelity and immorality, so they reached their summit at the same period, and both received ample illustration in the horrors committed during the French revolution.

But the general view here offered of the calamities that flow from the corruptions of religion, will be more minutely detailed in the sequel.

## THE VISION PREPARATORY TO THE SEVEN VIALS.

### CHAPTER XV.

Verse 1 *And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful; seven angels having the seven last plagues: for in them was completed the wrath of God.*

2 *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, standing upon the glassy sea, having the harps of God.*

3 *And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb; saying, Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord, God Almighty: true and just are thy ways, King of nations.*

4 *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou alone art holy! For all the nations shall come and worship thee: for thy righteous judgments have been made manifest.*

5 *And after this, I looked, and there was opened the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven.*

6 *And the seven angels, who had the seven plagues, came out of the temple, clothed in pure resplendent linen, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles.*

7 *And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.*

A.D. 1550 — 1866.

The evils arising from irreligion are now declared to be drawing to a close, and are to end with the emptying of the seven vials.

Christ's church militant again coming into view, now appears triumphant. Those who have not received the mark of the beast, who have refused to worship his image, and have discovered the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, being of the Gentile nations.

The song of Moses being joined with that of the Lamb, denotes the reunion of the parent with her child, or the Jews again entering into the church of Christ.

All nations will eventually embrace the Christian faith; for the fulfilment of prophecy will be made manifest; what is future being put by anticipation, as if past.

The true spirit of the Gospel dispensation, hitherto darkened or veiled from the sight of the world, will now be laid open.

But the seven last vials of wrath must first be poured out. The angels' issuing from the temple, bespeaks the religious origin of these evils.

And their commission to execute these judgments being immediately derived from the cherubim about the throne of God, denotes the same.

8 *And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power ; and no one was able to enter into the temple, until the seven plagues of the seven angels should be completed.*

Till the end of this period none can enter the temple ; clearly intimating that religion has not yet attained to perfect purity. A further reformation from the errors of popery is probably to take place.

The first four Seals, the four Trumpets, and the four Vials, each taken together, form an entire picture of the then state of the Christian world ; but the four Vials, like the four Trumpets, differ from the Seals as to the order in which the events are related. In each Seal the change of colour extends over the whole horse ; and as these changes allude to the state of Christianity, each being universal, they must of course be successive ; and appear to have followed each other at intervals of about half a century. But the Trumpets, and like them the Vials, extend each of them to parts only of the physical world ; and consequently, referring only to particular parts of the moral world, there is no necessity for their being successive ; but different parts may be affected simultaneously. Accordingly, the events to which they allude are not to be looked for in chronological succession, but will be found to be coexistent ; the effects of each Vial extending through the period of all the four ; and this period seems like that of the four Seals, and the four Trumpets, to comprise about two centuries ; that is, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

Under the former part of this period the harvest is included, and under the latter the vintage ; but the vintage seems to engross the larger share, the harvest being quickly despatched, as the manner in which it is foretold expresses : “ And the angel cast his sickle upon the earth, and it was reaped.” Thus suddenly was the reformation brought about. It is not however to be supposed that a change so sudden could be complete ; some remains of former errors would unavoidably be left. And the reformation, in fact, can only be considered as having begun at this time. The more enlightened protestants freely acknowledge, at the present day, their reluctance to subscribe to certain articles of faith upon which the church still thinks proper to insist.

## THE FIRST VIAL.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1550 — 1650.

*Verse 1 And I heard a loud voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go, and pour out the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*

*2 And the first went and poured out his vial upon the land; and there came an evil and a grievous sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and upon those who worshipped his image.*

The vials are declared to be the seven last plagues, under which the dominion of Antichrist is to be overthrown.

Worldly power and influence, though a secondary consideration to the Christian, are a primary object to the followers of the beast, and the loss of them is esteemed a grievous sore.

This abridgment of the power and authority of the Romish church, was one of the first effects of the reformation, as thus stated by Mosheim: "The church of Rome lost much of its ancient splendour and majesty, as soon as Luther and the other luminaries of the reformation had exhibited to the view of the European nations the Christian religion restored, at least to a considerable part of its native purity, and delivered from many of the superstitions under which it had lain so long disfigured. Among the most opulent states of Europe, several withdrew entirely from the jurisdiction of Rome; in others, certain provinces threw off the yoke of papal tyranny; and upon the whole, this defection produced a striking diminution both of the wealth and power of the Roman pontiffs. It must also be observed, that even the kings and states who adhered to the religion of Rome, yet changed their sentiments with respect to the claims and pretensions of its bishop. If they were not persuaded by the writings of the protestants to renounce the superstitions of popery, yet they drew from these writings important discoveries of the groundless claims and unlawful usurpations of the Roman pontiffs, and they came at length to perceive, that if the jurisdiction and authority of Rome should continue the same as before the rise of Luther, the rights of temporal princes and the majesty of civil government would sooner or later be absorbed in the gulf of papal avarice and ambition." — *Mosh.* vol. iv. p. 159.

## THE SECOND VIAL.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1550 — 1650.

Verse 3 *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea ; and there came blood as of a dead carcase, and every living soul died in the sea.*

Infidelity, awakened by the exposure of fraud and priestcraft, began to undermine the fabric of superstition, and to sap the foundation of the empire of Antichrist.

The rise of scepticism and infidelity was a consequence to be looked for, among the thinking and more enlightened part of the Romish church, from the exposure of the frauds which had been imposed upon the world in the name of religion. Interpreting the life to signify here, as elsewhere, the life which is in Christ, or the true faith, infidelity is aptly designated by the loss of life on the conversion of the sea into blood.

This spirit, which began to appear in the sixteenth century, openly manifested itself in the seventeenth, and far from having declined since, has continued, especially in catholic countries, to extend its influence up to the present age ; which may perhaps, more than any preceding it, be distinguished as the age of unbelief. The leading champions of infidelity in the seventeenth century, were Hobbes, Rochester, Shaftsbury, and Spinoza. In the last century, its progress was promoted by the writings of Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet, D'Alembert, and a whole host of others ; who are not to be considered as the cause of the doctrines they helped to propagate, but as composing part of a sect which must itself be regarded as the natural offspring of the system of fraud and delusion that had so long prevailed. That this sect and its sentiments are not confined to catholic countries, or to those who profess the Romish religion, is a fact which but too clearly denotes, that the seeds which produce them have not been exclusively sown in the Romish church. Wherever religion is employed as the means for obtaining worldly advantages, there the spirit of Antichrist prevails, and the same pernicious consequences may be expected to result from it.

## THE THIRD VIAL.

CHAPTER XVI.

A.D. 1650 — 1750.

Verse 4 *And the third poured out his vial upon the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters, and there came blood.*

5 *And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou which art and wast, the Holy One! in that thou hast executed this judgment.*

6 *For the blood of saints and of prophets they have poured forth, and blood thou hast given them to drink; they are worthy of it.*

7 *And I heard a voice from the altar saying, Even so, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy judgments.*

Immorality naturally flowed from infidelity, withdrawing alike the restraints imposed by superstition and by religion.

The consequences of which were afterwards amply illustrated in the horrors of the French revolution, visited on the followers of the beast.

The source of morality was further poisoned by the efforts of the church to maintain its authority at the expense of every principle of religion and virtue.

Efforts which only served to expose its iniquity and weaken its influence; as exemplified in the controversies of the Jesuits and the Jansenists.

Of the conduct and maxims of the Jesuits, Mosheim thus speaks: "Did we affirm that they have corrupted and perverted almost every branch and precept of morality, we should not express sufficiently the pernicious tendency of their maxims. Were we to go still farther, and maintain that they have sapped and destroyed its very foundation, we should advance no more than what innumerable writers of the Romish church abundantly testify." — *Mosheim*, vol. v. p. 189.

He thus speaks of the opposition of the Jansenists: "The Jansenists, and all who espoused their cause, distinguished themselves more especially in this opposition. They composed an innumerable multitude of books, in order to cover the sons of Loyola with eternal reproach, and to expose them to the hatred and scorn of the universe. Nor were these productions mere defamatory libels, &c., but were drawn from undeniable facts, and confirmed by unexceptionable testimonies." — *Mosheim*, vol. v. p. 176.



This dissension, as might be expected, contributed to expose the real principles which actuated the see of Rome, and more fully disclosed the fact, that temporal power was its leading object, and religion only a secondary consideration. It consequently tended to increase the growing opposition to its authority, and to accelerate its downfall; although the immediate result of this contest was favourable to the Jesuits, who enjoyed the protection of the Roman pontiff. Such indeed were their power and influence, that Mosheim terms them "the soul of the papal hierarchy, and the mainspring that directs its motions."

What occasioned this violent dissension in the bosom of the church, will be seen from the following statement; which will also show the nature of those moral evils, connived at by the Jesuits, and which the Jansenists in vain strove to remedy.

"But that which offends most the Jesuits, and the other creatures of the pontiff, is the austere severity that reigns in the system of moral discipline and practical religion adopted by the Jansenists. For the members of this sect cry out against the corruptions of the church of Rome, and complain, that neither its doctrines nor morals retain any traces of their former purity. They reproach the clergy with an universal depravation of sentiments and manners, and an entire forgetfulness of the dignity of their character, and the duties of their vocation. They censure the licentiousness of the monastic orders, &c. . . . .

"They maintain also, that the people ought to be instructed in all the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, and that for this purpose, the Scriptures and public liturgies should be offered to their perusal in their mother tongue;" &c.—*Mosh.* vol. v. p. 220.

Such evils (aptly symbolized by poisoning the waters of life), were acknowledged by one part of the Romish church, who lamented and sought to reform them; but whose efforts excited the bitter animosity and successful opposition of another.

The other controversies that disturbed the tranquillity of the Romish church, were but light blasts, says Mosheim, compared with this violent hurricane.

## THE FOURTH VIAL.

CHAPTER XVI.

1650 — 1750.

Verse 8 *And the fourth poured out his vial upon the sun, and it was given him to scorch the men with fire, and the men were scorched with great heat.*

9 *And the men blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues, and they did not repent for to give him glory.*

The fury of fanaticism was next let loose by the priesthood against those who sought to shake off the papal yoke.

Thus the followers of the beast became the victims of the tyranny they had themselves established.

If it be objected, that these calamities were visited upon the reformed rather than the Romish church; this may be admitted, and yet not derogate from the propriety of the view here taken; for who were the reformers principally at this period, but those who had been hitherto the dupes and instruments of popery; and who at length, having their eyes opened, desired to shake off its yoke; but experienced the evils of that tyranny which they had formerly supported? For instance, as Mosheim says in the sixteenth century, in Spain and Italy "great numbers of all ranks expressed an aversion for the papal yoke; but the popes put a stop to the progress of the reformation, by letting loose upon the pretended heretics their bloody inquisitors; and by racks, stakes, and gibbets, soon terrified the people back into popery." In the seventeenth century, resistance to the papal power produced similar effects in Portugal; and in Bohemia, after a fruitless struggle, and the unfortunate battle of Prague, the attempt to escape from papal tyranny was frustrated. "Some were committed to a perpetual prison; others banished for life; several had their estates confiscated; many were put to death; and the whole nation, says Mosheim, was obliged, from that fatal period, to embrace the religion of the victor, and bend an unwilling neck under the yoke of Rome."—Vol. v. p. 108.

In France, this spirit caused the edict of Nantes to be revoked, and in other countries the same cause naturally produced similar effects; the sufferers having been for the most part either Roman catholics themselves, or their immediate descendants.

## THE FIFTH VIAL.

### CHAPTER XVI.

1750 — 1800.

Verse 10 *And the fifth angel poured out his vial on the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened, and they bit their tongues from suffering.*

11 *And they blasphemed the God of heaven from their sufferings and their sores, and repented not of their works.*

The countries which profess the Romish faith, are distinctly announced as the objects of this visitation, whether moral, political, or both.

And these countries have been especially visited by the calamities that have convulsed Europe for the last thirty years; and nearly subverted the papal throne.

If the calamities of the last Vial appear somewhat equivocal as to the objects on whom they fell, its victims being rather such as had been, than such as continued to be supporters of Antichrist; there can be no question as to the objects of the present Vial, its judgments falling directly on the throne of the beast. And such judgments they certainly have been as are wholly unparalleled in history, whether they be viewed morally or politically. For the event here alluded to can be no other than that terrible explosion the French revolution. Whatever room there may have been for reprehension in the conduct of this fearful struggle against superstition and tyranny, it cannot be viewed by the liberal and enlightened otherwise than as a natural consequence of the long reign of darkness and delusion which had preceded it, and as a gigantic effort of the human mind to burst its fetters and obtain its emancipation.

The evils of this great convulsion, moral, political, and religious, have strikingly fulfilled the prophecy, and fallen upon the throne of the beast; for they have been almost exclusively visited upon those countries where the Romish faith predominated, as Italy, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and France.

It is however in a spiritual sense alone, that the true Christian can be said to have enjoyed complete exemption from the moral evils visited upon the Romish church during this momentous crisis.

## THE HARVEST AND VINTAGE.

## CHAPTER XIV.

A.D. 1550 — 1866.

Verse 14 *And I looked, and lo! a white cloud; and upon the cloud one sitting, like the Son of man; having upon his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*

15 *And another angel came forth from the temple, crying with a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap; for the time of thy reaping is come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*

16 *And he who was sitting upon the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth, and the earth was reaped.*

17 *And another angel came forth from the temple in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

18 *And another angel came forth from the altar, having power over the fire; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.*

19 *And the angel cast his sickle to the earth, and gathered the grapes of the vine of the earth, and cast them into the wine-press of the wrath of God.*

20 *And the wine-press was trodden on the outside of the city; and there came forth blood from the wine-press even unto the bridles of the horses, for the space of a thousand six hundred furlongs.*

The metaphors of harvest and vintage evidently allude to the effects of religion and irreligion growing up in the mind; as elsewhere used by our Saviour.

The separation of the wheat from the tares, which had ripened together, began at the reformation; the first signal effort to emancipate the mind from the thralldom of superstition and priestcraft.

This is distinctly the harvest. The vintage follows, and is declared to be a vintage of wrath.

As the mind expanded, further efforts at emancipation naturally followed.

While corresponding efforts to perpetuate the reign of imposture and delusion produced religious warfare with its attendant horrors; denoted by the fire of the altar, and the wrath of God.

A conspicuous instance of this, and apparently alluded to here, was the French revolution; avowedly an effort of resistance to tyranny and priestcraft.

But these calamities, here intimated only in a general way, will be more minutely described under the seven vials of wrath which follow.

Of the evils resulting from a system of delusion and falsehood, one is its laying the foundation for infidelity and atheism. For, as knowledge increases, and the mind becomes

enlightened, the imposture will be detected, and none but the blindly ignorant, or the foolishly credulous, will any longer be imposed upon. But while the system of delusion thus works its own downfall, it is not to be supposed that those who once held it sacred, and never knew a more perfect religion, will, on rejecting it, select some other from among the number of those which they have hitherto despised or abhorred. The consequence to be expected is rather, that they will for a time regard every other form of religion as a system of priestcraft and imposture like their own; and thus infidelity or atheism naturally follows.

This evil has been abundantly exemplified during the last three centuries; for since the revival of learning has exposed the impositions of the Romish church, and excited resistance to its usurped authority at the reformation, we have witnessed the rise and progress of infidelity, secretly working its way, and diffusing its influence through the writings of wits, sages, and philosophers. It reached its summit at the French revolution, when an event unparalleled in history occurred, a national renunciation of the belief in God and a future state.

The next evil that results from a system of fraud and imposture, is immorality; following as a natural consequence of infidelity, which removes at once the restraints imposed both by superstition and by religion; for the worst form of religion imposes some moral restraint, and is preferable to absolute atheism. The consequence that ensues from the removal of this restraint, is to loosen the bonds of social order; and as these evils have been coexistent, namely, infidelity and immorality, so they reached their summit at the same period, and both received ample illustration in the horrors committed during the French revolution.

But the general view here offered of the calamities that flow from the corruptions of religion, will be more minutely detailed in the sequel.

## THE ANGEL'S INTERPRETATION.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Verse 1 *And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven vials, and spake with me, saying, Come hither. I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot, who sitteth upon the many waters.*

2 *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunken with the wine of her fornication.*

3 *And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness. And I saw a woman seated on a scarlet coloured wild beast, which was full of names of blasphemy; having seven heads and ten horns.*

4 *And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and richly adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication.*

5 *And upon her forehead a name written, A mystery, the Great Babylon, the Mother of Harlots, and of the abominations of the earth.*

6 *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.*

7 *And I wondered, beholding her, with great astonishment. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore dost thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of him that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns.*

8 *The wild beast which thou beholdest, was, and is not, and is*

One of the angels of the vials interpreting the prophecy, may also signify, that at this time, and not sooner, the true sense of it will come to be fully developed.

Spiritual fornication, which means idolatry, shows the Latin church to be still intended, though under a different symbol.

The Latin empire here appears, as before, under the symbol of the ten-horned beast; while the woman corresponds to the two-horned beast, or the Latin church.

The gaudy attire and meretricious ornaments of this woman, form a striking contrast to those of the other woman, who was adorned with the heavenly luminaries, emblems of light and truth.

Instead of the crown of stars on her head, this woman has a mysterious name on her forehead, to blind and mislead the world.

Not literal but spiritual drunkenness and bloodshed (slaying the life in Christ), are to be understood.

The angel's interpretation forms the basis of that which is generally given; and is the authority for applying the contents of the Little Book to the Latin Empire and the Romish church.

The Latin kingdom, founded by Latinus, had existed, and had

*about to ascend from the bottomless deep, and to go into destruction. And the inhabitants of the earth shall wonder, (they whose names are not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world), beholding the beast, that he was, and is not, although he is.*

9 *Herein is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, where the woman is seated upon them; and are seven kings.*

10 *Five of them have fallen, (and) one of them is; the other is not yet come: and when he is come, he must remain a little.*

11 *And the wild beast which was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into destruction.*

12 *And the ten horns which thou didst see are ten kings, who have not yet received dominion; but receive power as kings, one hour with the beast.*

13 *These have one counsel, and give their power and their authority to the beast.*

14 *These shall war with the Lamb; and the Lamb shall overcome them, (for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings), and they who are with him, called and chosen, and faithful.*

15 *And he saith unto me, The waters which thou didst see, where the harlot is seated, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and languages:*

16 *And the ten horns which thou didst see, and the wild beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked;*

ceased to exist independently, when blended with the Roman; and was destined to rise again, and revive with the spirit of idolatry, under the Romish or Latin church; and be admired by all who do not recognise in her the features of Antichrist.

The seven heads of the beast are here declared to have a twofold signification, being seven mountains, and seven kings, or forms of government.

Five of these had fallen, one was in existence, and the last yet to come at the time the prophecy was delivered.

The last, or seventh head, was really the eighth, being a short time patriciate, before it became imperial.

The ten horns of the beast are also declared to be ten kingdoms, which were not yet in existence at the time of the prophecy.

These kingdoms, which are independent states, form by their union the Latin empire.

They are hostile to the true church of Christ, but in this spiritual warfare they will be finally vanquished and overthrown, by the Lamb and his followers, or the true Christians.

The waters are declared to signify the nations over which the dominion of the idolatrous church was foretold to extend.

And these same kingdoms are destined to become hostile to this church, and eventually to overthrow and abolish it.

17 *And shall eat her flesh, and burn her utterly with fire; for God hath put into their hearts to perform his counsel, and to agree and give their dominion to the beast, until the words of God shall be accomplished.*

18 *And the woman whom thou didst see, is the great city which hath dominion over the kings of the earth.*

They will expose her frauds and delusions, and utterly subvert the whole fabric of superstition, which for a time they had contributed to raise up and support.

And the city which then reigned over the earth, was Imperial Rome, or the Roman Empire.

The Antichristian city, or spiritual Babylon, stands in opposition to the city that represents the kingdom of Christ, called the New Jerusalem.

The blasphemous titles assumed by the Romish church are numerous; such as Sancta (holy), Sacro sancta (most holy), Sancta sedes (the holy see). The pope is styled Sanctissimus et Beatissimus Pater (most holy and blessed Father), Sua Sanctitas (his Holiness), Sanctissimus Dominus Noster (our most holy Lord), and so forth. But, in the spiritual acceptation, blasphemy signifies apostacy, and spiritual fornication means idolatry; as, for instance, in 1 *Chron.* v. 25, "They transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them." So in *Acts*, xxvi. 11, "And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme."

The explanation of the beast, with his name and number, is borrowed from the ingenious and learned work of Mr. Clarke; which the writer esteems a valuable addition to our knowledge on this point, though he does not concur with some of Mr. Clarke's views, in adopting the political, rather than the spiritual interpretation. The heads and horns of the beast have been before enumerated in the Little Book, with the exception of the eighth head, which is declared to be the same as the seventh. And so in fact it was, according to the explanation proposed by Mr. Faber; the Feudal Elective Imperial head having for a short time existed under the title of Patriciate, before it became Imperial.



## CONCLUSION.

THE object of the present treatise being limited to the interpretation of the prophecies already fulfilled, properly terminates with the pouring out of the Sixth Vial; the accomplishment of which is obviously taking place in the impending fate of the Ottoman Empire: and although we may perceive, in the signs of the times, manifest preparation for the pouring out of the Seventh, yet the plan we have laid down forbids our attempting to pry into futurity.

The introduction of the seventeenth chapter, which presents the angel's interpretation, was necessary to render the subject complete, since it contains the principal sanction for the exposition offered of the subject of the Little Book, as relating to the Romish church; although it is not conceived to furnish, as some suppose it does, any ground for applying to the Roman Empire, the whole series of prophecies contained in the Apocalypse.

The exposition of them, which has been proposed in the present treatise, is far from being expected to convince those who have previously embraced different views; or to remove all the remaining difficulties attendant upon this interesting subject. It is however hoped, that it affords sufficient evidence of the prophetic character, and, consequently, the divine origin of the book, to satisfy every candid and unprejudiced inquirer.

In concluding, there are two points to which it appears desirable to recall the attention of the reader, as most calculated to impress this conviction on his mind, and likewise as affording the strongest support to the interpretation which has been offered.

The first of these is the consistency maintained throughout, in the interpretation of the metaphorical language; and the accordance of the meanings affixed to these symbols here, with their signification in other parts of the sacred writings. Thus the expression of Christ's kingdom is con-

stantly used in allusion to the establishment of Christianity on earth;—the kingdoms of the earth, or of this world, in contradistinction to the kingdom of heaven, contrasting temporal with spiritual things;—life, as signifying the life which is in Christ;—death, as the death unto righteousness;—sword and fire, as emblems of strife,—“I come not to send peace, but a sword,”—“I came to send fire on the earth;”—trees and grass, as the generations of men,—“all flesh is grass;”—the ripening of the fruits of the earth, to denote the seeds of religion growing up in the mind,—as in the parable of the sower;—the waters of life, as signifying the truths of the Gospel;—the heavenly luminaries, as the lights of true religion;—the Sun, our Lord, the Sun of righteousness;—and so on. When to these we add the interpretations which, in particular parts of the prophecy, are expressly given by the angel himself, it may safely be asserted, that the explanation of this language is not fanciful, or dependent upon the discretion of the interpreter, but derived from the only infallible source, namely, Scripture itself.

The other point which deserves the attention of the reader, regards the events to which these symbols and this metaphorical language are applied.

And here we must recall the express declaration of our Saviour, “My kingdom is within you.”—“Such a kingdom,” Archdeacon Woodhouse justly observes, “is in a great degree independent of the fates and revolutions of empires; being affected only by those changes in the political world which are calculated to produce the increase or decline of religious knowledge, and of pure profession and practice.” When the prophecy is viewed in this light, or as foretelling the progress of Christianity, its interpretation, instead of requiring or admitting of an arbitrary selection of events, will be found invariably to have reference to the most striking and important occurrences that the history of each period presents: while the chronological order in which they succeed each other is so regular, that no interval remains to be filled up; and so minute is the detail of events foretold, that it forms a complete and circumstantial, although a compendious history of Christianity, from the apostolic age down to the present day. But the whole

series of these events, which was foretold above seventeen hundred years ago, and which, in every succeeding age, has been, and still continues to be receiving its fulfilment, so far transcends the utmost reach of human foresight and sagacity, that one only conclusion remains to be drawn, namely, that the whole is of divine origin.

In short, the Apocalypse forms a regular chain of prophecy, constituting a perpetual miracle; affording supernatural evidence in support of Christianity; disclosing itself, as it was foretold it would, in these times, when it seems most called for, being an age of unbelief; calculated to become more and more convincing to succeeding generations; and as it extends to the end of the world, allowing to the Christians of future ages, as well as to those of the present day, the opportunity of becoming eye-witnesses of miraculous interposition, no less than those who lived in the apostolic age.



## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE A.

ENTERING upon the exposition of the Apocalypse, Arch-deacon Woodhouse lays down four excellent rules, to the following effect, though not precisely in the same words :

1. That the interpretation of the symbolical language is to be sought for in Scripture itself.

2. That the subject to which it refers, is the progress of the kingdom of Christ.

3. As this kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, so it is the spiritual interpretation that is to be looked for.

4. That we are not to attempt the particular explanation of those prophecies which remain yet to be fulfilled.

Although the propriety of the two first at least of these principles has been generally admitted by more recent commentators, yet have they by a few only been partially adopted, but strictly adhered to by none that the writer has met with. Instead of the progress of Christianity, the fate of the Roman empire continues to be made the leading object in the interpretation.

However plausible the reasons that have been alleged for this, such as the intimate connexion between these events, the true cause may perhaps be found, partly in the stronger interest excited by temporal than by spiritual concerns, and partly in the belief, that a history of the mind of man, of his progress in moral and religious improvement, could not furnish events sufficiently striking and peculiar to admit of a satisfactory interpretation. A little reflection, however, will probably show, that this view of the subject affords an interpretation far more distinct and satisfactory than the other.

Wars and battles may indeed be dated with greater chronological precision, but between one war and another little intrinsic difference is to be found. The same narrative of slaughter and cruelty, plunder and devastation, with their

concomitants, famine and pestilence, belong to them all ; and little beyond the date and extent of these calamities appears in each, to distinguish one from another. However varied the symbols used in the prophecy, they must, when so interpreted, be all applied to events either similar in their kind, or but slightly diversified. On the other hand, upon the spiritual plan of interpretation, each symbol will be found applicable to an event perfectly different from every other. Let the four first Seals and the four Trumpets be taken as examples. It is requisite to remark, that the repetition of a symbol may be rendered unnecessary in two ways, — to wit, by the events to which it alludes never recurring, or by their never ceasing : we shall find instances of both as we proceed. Under the First Seal, the purity and virtue of the apostolic age, the magnanimity of the first Christians, their contempt for riches and honours, were unparalleled in history ; and since their extinction, the symbol that denotes them has unhappily hitherto required no repetition. The rise of heat and animosity, which at an early period began to sap the foundation of true Christian feeling, sufficiently distinguishes the Second Seal from its predecessor ; its symbol recurs indeed, but in conjunction with others which mark a difference both peculiar and striking. The origin of superstition and monasticism, or rather, their admission into Christianity, was an event important and distinct enough to characterize the Third Seal. While the total extinction of morality and virtue among the great majority of the Christian clergy, and consequently among the laity also, was the peculiar and distinguishing feature of the Fourth Seal.

Dark as this picture may appear, it becomes still more gloomy under the Trumpets. The primitive piety and virtue of the apostolic age being extinct, the profession of Christianity was at length embraced, chiefly for the purpose of obtaining worldly wealth and prosperity ; and means the most flagitious were resorted to without scruple in order to further that end. The most detestable crimes were committed, the most bloody wars were carried on, by the Christian bishops and patriarchs, contending for worldly power and supremacy ; as the history of this period attests, and as the Donatist faction amply illustrates. The same spirit unhappily continuing to animate the church through suc-

ceeding centuries without intermission, rendered unnecessary the renewal of the symbol which denotes it. The Second Trumpet announces another event, if possible more momentous, and more injurious in its consequences to religion, than the former. This is the rise of that "fatal controversy," as Mosheim terms it, about Three Persons in the Godhead; and if bloodshed be the criterion of importance, it may be safely said to have caused more than the subversion of the Roman Empire. Under the Third Trumpet the occurrence announced is distinct from all the preceding, and more important still, being no less than the revival of idolatry, or of paganism under a new form. To the evils already enumerated, one was still wanting to complete the picture. The practice of falsifying Scripture had not yet become prevalent; but at length became so common, that the church, as Mosheim says, "was overwhelmed by these spurious productions, these infamous impositions."

Surely no one professing sincerely the Christian faith, will contend that these events were either less definite, or less worthy of being noticed, in a prophecy foretelling the history and corruptions of Christianity, than the perpetually recurring narrative of wars and tumults, rapine and slaughter, and the political revolutions of empires. "My kingdom is not of this world," says our Lord; and again, "The kingdom of God is within you." Do not expressions such as these clearly intimate where we are to look for its history? The Lamb is declared to be alone worthy to open the Seals of this prophecy. May we not understand by this, that the true spirit of the Christian religion can alone furnish the clew to its interpretation?

Archdeacon Woodhouse observes: "The application of the prophecies of the Seals to the fortunes of the Roman Empire, and to the character of its princes, appears to me forced and unjustified. It would be curious to observe whence it took its rise, and how, by degrees, it obtained so general a reception in modern times, or at least in our country. There is reason to believe, that the most ancient commentators, Papias, Irenæus, Methodius, Hyppolytus, &c. (mentioned by Andreas Cæsariensis, as exhibiting the lights which he followed in his commentary), entertained no such idea. For Andreas has interpreted the

three first Seals to exhibit *the history of the Christian church*. The prophecy of the Fourth Seal he indeed supposes, with the modern commentators, to foretel the slaughter, pestilence, &c. which raged in the *Roman Empire under Maximin*. But such a comment on the Fourth Seal could not be derived from these ancient expositors; because they did not live to see those times, and explain the prediction by the event. It is therefore not *their* exposition, but probably that of Andreas himself, who wrote about the year 500. And certainly it must be thought inconsistent and disorderly, after interpreting the three first Seals, as relating to the fortunes of the *Christian church*, to understand the Fourth as respecting the *Roman Empire*. But this application of the Fourth Seal by Andreas seems to have afforded the first hint of this mode of application, which modern expositors have gradually followed. Viega, a Jesuit, who wrote in the sixteenth century, seems to have been one of the first who applied all the four Seals to the *Roman history*. Mede, who, by his just reputation as an ingenious interpreter, has given the greatest encouragement to this mode of application, though he interpreted the Second, Third, and Fourth Seals as relating to the Roman Empire, yet understood the First to treat clearly and exclusively of the Christian church. Indeed, the First Seal cannot, consistently with the symbols compared in Scripture, be otherwise applied. And if the First Seal has so evident a designation, why, in the interpretation of the rest, are we to change our object, without special and compulsive reason? The writers who have followed Mede have been aware, that consistency required of them to apply *all* these predictions to the *same kind* of history; but, to obtain this consistency, what method have they pursued? They have not relinquished Mede's interpretation of the Second, Third, and Fourth Seals, thereby to bring them in unison with that of the First; but labouring to make the symbols of the First Seal agree with his interpretations of the three following, they have most unscripturally and unfitly represented the rider of the white horse (whose purity can belong only to the most perfect Christian), to signify those bloody and heathen soldiers, Vespasian and Titus." . . . . . — Woodhouse, p. 160.



## NOTE B.

THE proper translation of this passage, according to Archdeacon Woodhouse, is a "yoke," instead of a pair of balances; such being the primary meaning of the word ζυγος, when used without any additional word to denote its secondary signification. The yoke is the staff or pole placed across the neck of the oxen, by which they are so fixed to the plough as to draw equally; and from its construction, as the Archdeacon observes, might suggest the idea of a pair of balances, and thus the word probably obtained its secondary meaning. In either sense, however, it is sufficiently appropriate here; the yoke aptly denoting the burthensome ceremonies which superstition imposes on the mind; while the pair of balances are peculiarly adapted to the expression of scarcity, or, figuratively understood, spiritual dearth. In this latter sense, of a pair of balances, its use in traffic naturally suggests another idea, equally applicable to this period, namely, the bargaining spirit of the ascetics, and others of the monastic order; who foolishly imagined, that by inflicting certain measures of austerity and penance in this world, they were purchasing for themselves an equivalent of enjoyment and happiness in the world to come. But Christianity requires no such inflictions. "My yoke is easy, and my burthen is light," says our Lord.

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## NOTE C.

THE interpretation of the Fourth Seal being the first point in which the writer materially deviates from his respected guide, he feels called upon to assign more particularly his reasons for so doing. In the first place, the chronological arrangement he adopts, as already explained, leads him to affix to this Seal an earlier period than that of the papal corruption. Secondly, what relates to the papacy, belonging to the history of the Western apostacy, forms the subject of the Little Book; whereas the four Seals, as the

Archdeacon admits, relate rather to the general corruptions of religion, if not more especially to those in the East, and form part of what is more particularly addressed to the seven churches in Asia. And lastly, what the writer esteems a paramount consideration, the strict adherence to historical fact, and the faithful narrative of the state of the church at the period under consideration, constrain him to adopt the interpretation he has offered, applying this Seal to the vices and profligacy of the clergy in the third century. Nor is this important only as forming a prominent feature in the picture presented by the four Seals, but moreover as the profligacy and immorality of the clergy, so amply testified, as Mosheim says, by the most respectable writers of this age, laid the foundation for the enormities which followed, and which are foretold under the four Trumpets.

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#### NOTE D.

THE proposed interpretation of the Sixth Seal is not supported by any authority that the writer is acquainted with; it must stand or fall, therefore, by its own merits. The difficulties it involves may appear formidable; we shall try to obviate them.

In the first place, then, the period referred to is agreed upon by most modern commentators. It is the age of Constantine. Further; the events alluded to may also be admitted; namely, the conversion of Constantine, the consequent establishment of Christianity, and the subversion of paganism.

But there are two ways of viewing these events, and here we are at issue. One view is calculated to awaken feelings of triumph and exultation at the prosperity of the Christian cause, and its elevation to the imperial throne; the other affords only matter for lamentation and regret, at the fatal influence that worldly prosperity had in extinguishing the remaining spark of piety and virtue in the nominal Christian church. Which of these is here alluded to in the prophecy? is the question.

Surely the preceding picture of the gradual decline and decay of religion and morality, leads us rather to look now for the awful crisis of their dissolution, than for a scene of prosperity and triumph.

That the advancement to wealth and honour was fatal to the cause of true religion, history bears ample testimony. From this time its professors lost sight of the divine precepts and example of their Lord, and imitated the conduct, if they did not avow the maxims, of their pagan persecutors. And if there be any truth in history, the horrors committed in the name of Christianity have far exceeded those of paganism.

If the preceding part of the prophecy thus appears more in unison with the interpretation proposed in the text, not less so does that which follows. Nothing contained under the Trumpets indicates any change favourable to the progress of true religion; on the contrary, one subject alone engrosses the whole series of these visions, and that is, the denunciation of divine wrath against a corrupt world.

While uniformity of design in the prophecy thus accords with the view here proposed, consistency of interpretation seems to demand it. If we suppose the dissolution of nature and the departure of heaven under this Seal to denote the downfall of paganism, then must the heavenly luminaries be applied to the darkness of the heathen mythology, in direct violation of the meaning elsewhere affixed to these symbols. But that the darkening of these lights should symbolize the corruption or total extinction of true religion, and the perversion of the mild benignant spirit of Christianity to the sanction and vindication of persecution and bloodshed, perfectly accords with the uniform explanation of these symbols.

Again; the terror and dismay of the inhabitants of the earth would have had little foundation in the establishment of genuine Christianity in the room of paganism; but the extinction of true religion, and the advancement of spurious Christianity to the pagan throne, fully justified their fears. The apparent contradiction of terms in the expression, "the wrath of the Lamb," soon received ample illustration.

The general subject of the Seals, is manifestly the corruption of Christianity; and the Sixth Seal, under the figure

of the last day, comprises three distinct sets of symbols — one representing the dissolution of nature, another the dismay of the inhabitants of the earth, and the third, the protection afforded to the true servants of God. Now if the first denote the abolition of paganism, and the second the dismay of the heathens, how is the third to be understood? Surely the true servants of God, here described, cannot be meant to designate the corrupt and degenerate, who are Christians only in name. But if these corrupt Christians be intended neither by the one nor by the other, then are they wholly omitted, and bear no part in this Seal; which yet, like its predecessors, must relate to the corruptions of religion. Whereas, upon the interpretation proposed in the text, which applies the departure of the heavens, and the darkening of the heavenly luminaries, to the extinction of true Christianity, these corruptions remain, as in the other Seals, the main object of this vision. Thus unity of plan in the prophecy, and consistency in the interpretation, seem equally in favour of the view proposed.

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#### NOTE E.

ARCHDEACON WOODHOUSE remarks, in treating of the Trumpets: "The greater part of modern commentators, following Joseph Mede, have supposed these prophecies fulfilled, in the ravages committed by the Gothic barbarians on the provinces of the *Roman Empire*. But I have as yet been able to perceive no plausible reason, produced either by Mede or his followers, to show why the prophecies of the Apocalypse in general, why the Seals, or why the four first Trumpets in particular, should be understood to relate to the history of the *Roman Empire*. Mede says indeed, at his entrance upon the explanation of the Seals, that 'as Daniel in the Old Testament both presignified the coming of Christ, and arranged the fortunes of the Jewish church, by the succession of empires, so the Apocalypse is to be supposed to measure the Christian history by the means of the Roman Empire, which was to be yet remaining after Christ.' The conjecture is good; and as such will be acknowledged

in its proper place. For in the course of the prophecy, that beast of Daniel (or one nearly resembling him, and plainly representing the *remains* of the Roman Empire,) will appear. But before the symbols under which the prophecy is expressed are seen clearly to indicate the *Roman Empire*, why are we to expect that the prophecy should relate its fortunes? The subject of these divine visions is of superior importance:—*the fates and fortunes of the Christian church*.—"Non res Romanæ perituraque regna."—P. 220.

With regard to the chronology of the Trumpets, conceiving it to run parallel to that of the Seals, Archdeacon Woodhouse adopts a different interpretation from the one here proposed. His application is as follows: "Thus I suppose the four first Trumpets to afford a general view of the warfare which the Christian religion underwent upon its first establishment. The history delivered under the Seals, after a solemn pause and silence, begins again. Under the Seals, the degeneracy of the church had been described; under the Trumpets, the attacks which she had to sustain from her Antichristian foes. And she is first represented as undergoing various kinds of assault in her several divisions; these divisions of the Christian world bearing analogy to the scriptural divisions of the natural world. 1. The storm of persecution in Judea, which, murdering the martyrs and dispersing the apostles, is aptly represented by hail and fire mingled with blood; on the bursting forth of which, the weak in faith fall away. 2. The Gentile persecution, arising from the pagan religion, which is fitly designated by a burning mountain. 3. The corruption of the waters of life by the earliest heretics, and by injudicious teachers. 4. The consequent failure in part of that bright and glorious light which originally beamed from this Revelation. The symbols do not appear to me to warrant a more especial interpretation of them." Such is the Archdeacon's interpretation; in the principle of which we agree, but differ in the application. We equally regard the Trumpets as foretelling the attacks made upon the Christian religion by its Antichristian foes. But, instead of applying them to literal persecutions and external foes, it is to the spirit warring within that we look for the fulfilment. As the kingdom of God is within us, so is also the kingdom of Antichrist, or the opposition to

**Christianity.** 1. What can be more decidedly Antichristian than the spirit of contention for worldly power and supremacy? 2. What can be more so, than the impious audacity of man, in presuming to pry into and scrutinize the nature of the Godhead? 3. Can any thing be more decidedly Antichristian than the idolatrous worship of saints and images? 4. Or, lastly, can any thing be more so than the falsification of Scripture, the darkening of that light, the imparting of which was the main object of Christ's appearance in the world?

Thus, in deviating from the letter, we trust we are adhering to the spirit of the interpretation, as laid down in the Archdeacon's fundamental rules, or controlling principles, stated in Note A.

Interpretations of the Third and Fourth Trumpets, nearly the same as those here proposed, have been given by Mr. Bayford, in his *Messiah's Kingdom*. He supposes the burning mountain in the Second Trumpet to symbolize the contentions for power and supremacy among the clergy; but to the writer that symbol appears more applicable to religious controversy, as stated in the text.

#### NOTE F.

**TAKING** the fountains of waters in the Third Trumpet, figuratively, as the waters of life, or the Scriptures, is objected to by Mr. Cunningham, in his ingenious work on the Seals and Trumpets, where he observes, that no particular indication appears here to warrant their being taken in that sense; whereas in other parts of Scripture, some additional epithet is always added, when they are to be understood spiritually; as, "the waters of life," or "living waters." Were it indeed intended, as Mr. Cunningham supposes it to be, that one part of the prophecy, or even one part of the same vision, is to be interpreted in a figurative, and another in a literal sense; then some indication would become indispensably necessary to direct our choice, and lead us to the right interpretation. But if it be meant, as we conceive it is, that

every part of the prophecy should be understood in the spiritual sense, then such an indication becomes superfluous. If it be said that this very expression does actually occur in the Sixth Trumpet, with the additional epithet prefixed, as fountains of *living waters*; the answer is obvious. In this case it could not be otherwise, for the figure is borrowed from the spiritual world, where there are none but living waters. Instead of being analogous, the cases are just reversed; in other instances, the metaphor borrowed from the natural world, is to be applied spiritually; whereas in this instance, the metaphor is borrowed from the spiritual, to be applied, still in a spiritual sense indeed, but to the temporal world.

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#### NOTE G.

THE reader is not to understand the application of the Fourth Trumpet as an assertion that, prior to this period, no spurious writings appeared in the church; such a statement would be far from the truth. But it was at this time that falsification of Scripture, for fraudulent purposes, came to be systematically practised. Even as early as the first century, histories of Christ were published, says Mosheim, by persons probably with good intention, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, and some fictitious writings were imposed upon the world by fraudulent men as the writings of the apostles.

“These apocryphal and spurious writings,” he says, must have produced a sad confusion, and rendered both the history and doctrines of Christ uncertain, had not the rulers of the church used all possible care and diligence in separating the books that were truly apostolic and divine from all that spurious trash, and conveying them down to posterity in one volume.”—Vol. i. p. 109.

In the second century, here considered as the period of the Third Seal, when the caution was given, “See thou hurt not the oil and the wine,” Mosheim expressly states,

that notwithstanding their vicious mode of argumentation, yet the writers of this period had more candour and probity than in succeeding ages. And he charges the Platonists and Pythagoreans with first introducing at this time the practice of sophistry, and the use of pious frauds, in support of what they esteemed the truth; but he acknowledges, that the true Christians were not wholly exempt from this charge.

In the third century, he notices, with still severer reprehension, the increasing custom of supporting their arguments by lies and fictions, and enumerates, as the spurious productions of this age, the Book of Canons, falsely ascribed to the apostles, the Apostolical Constitutions, the Recognitions, and Clementina; which, he says, were, with other productions, for a long time too much esteemed by credulous men.

From the fourth century, the frequency of councils and public disputations increased the temptations among disputants, to produce fictitious authorities in support of their respective arguments; but it is not till the fifth century that Mosheim expresses himself in the strong terms of reprobation quoted in the text, where he says, "the whole Christian church was at this time overwhelmed by these spurious productions, these infamous impositions."

Mr. Cunningham, in his Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets, objects to the spiritual interpretation of this Seal, "that the sun, a third part of which is smitten under the Fourth Trumpet, must be a symbol denoting our Lord — the Sun of righteousness;" but "*the absurdity of supposing, that any of these Trumpets can affect Him, is so manifest,*" he says, that such an interpretation cannot be the true one. It would be absurd to suppose, that Christ himself could be personally affected by man's perversity; but no way absurd to suppose, that the light which he imparted to the world might be obscured by man. When we speak in familiar language, of the sun as darkened, we do not mean that the luminary itself is changed, but the medium through which we view it. So it is with the light derived from Christ; and the metaphor is perfectly apposite. But in language so highly figurative, it is no fair objection if the same symbol sometimes stand for the light itself, and sometimes for the medium through which we receive it.



## NOTE H.

THE spiritual interpretation of the symbols of the Fifth Trumpet is almost entirely borrowed from Archdeacon Woodhouse, although the subject to which the writer applies them is different from his. The cause of this difference will be found in the chronological arrangement; and the reader who compares the two modes of application, will judge how far the aptitude of the symbols warrants our applying them to the Mahommedan apostacy, rather than the Gnostic heresy.

The superiority of the spiritual over the literal plan of explanation in this Seal, may be seen by reference to any of the numerous writers who have adopted that plan; which will, in many instances, be found wholly incompatible with consistency of interpretation, for some of the symbols do not admit of a literal construction.

For example, the crowns of the locusts are supposed to allude to the turbans of the Saracens, — the faces of men, to their wearing beards or mustachios; — their hair, “as of women,” to their wearing long hair; — but their teeth “as of lions,” must be taken in a figurative sense, and are variously explained, as denoting either their bodily strength, their bravery in battle, or their rapacity after conquest. The prophecy says, “In those days, men shall seek death, and shall not find it; shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.” — This verse again cannot be literally understood. Surely those who were literally weary of life, could find no more difficulty than at other times in terminating their existence. But spiritual death, or the disbelief in Christ, when once that belief had taken root, was not so easily obtained. The Christians might indeed openly profess Mahommedism, but the scorpion stings of conscience would remain to belie that profession, and would not fail sooner or later to bring remorse and repentance. In short, the spiritual plan alone admits of consistency of interpretation throughout.

## NOTE I.

**ALMOST** all commentators agree, that the larger and the little book of the Apocalypse treat of different subjects. The prevalent opinion is, that one relates to the Roman Empire, and the other to the Romish church. Archdeacon Woodhouse seems to stand almost alone in the opinion that they both equally treat of the progress of Christianity, but that one relates chiefly to its history in the East, and the other in the West.

In adopting this division of the prophetic history into Eastern and Western, but applying to it, as we do, a different plan of chronological arrangement, it will be found much more closely adhered to in the prophecy, than even the Archdeacon's scheme represents; and some repetitions, which seem to be deviations from it in his view, will no longer be found to occur in this. Thus, instead of extending the Third and Fourth Seals to the papal corruptions, and thus anticipating, in the larger book, the subject of the little one which follows; we confine these Seals to the earlier periods of Christianity, before the papal tyranny was established. And afterwards, instead of applying the two-horned beast to Mahommedism as well as papacy, we confine it to the latter; and thus avoid the necessity of repeating in the little book, what had been before stated in the larger.

But if, under the Eastern division, we include also Africa, all the events of the Seals and Trumpets will then fall under it. And this division, according to Mr. Culbertson, was what the Jews actually understood by the earth and the sea, on each of which the angel placed one foot. Thus he observes: "By the earth, the Jews understood the large continents of Asia and Africa, or all those places to which they had access by land; and by the sea, they meant the continent of Europe, and the numerous islands with which it is surrounded; or all those places to which they had access only by water." — *Culbertson's Lectures on the Prophecies of John*, vol. i. p. 291.

The prophecy being addressed to the churches in Asia, and Christianity having at that time made little progress in the West, shows that the first four Seals must relate to the East. The subject of the Fifth and Sixth Trumpets, relating to the Saracens, in like manner confines them almost exclusively to the East; and when Africa is included in the larger book, there will be found nothing in the remaining Seals or Trumpets but what may fall under this division. After Christianity became extinct in the East and South, then the scene changes, and what remains must, till it revives in the East, necessarily treat of its progress in the West; this being the subject of the Little Book. Moreover it appears, by the subject being resumed from the earliest periods in the Little Book, that this branch of it was meant to be complete in itself.

It must be observed, that the terms "heaven" and "earth," in the common translation, are both used in a twofold sense, one a general, the other a particular acceptation. Thus heaven signifies sometimes the place where the vision was presented to the prophet, and sometimes the heaven is a part of the vision itself. So the term earth is sometimes used generally, as including land and water, rivers, &c., and sometimes particularly as distinguishing land from water.

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#### NOTE K.

SEVERAL commentators have offered an exposition nearly similar to the one proposed in the text, by supposing the witnesses to symbolize the Old and New Testaments.

This is objected to by Mr. Faber, chiefly on the ground that the two olive trees and two candlesticks, symbols equally applied to the witnesses, are declared in the prophecy to signify churches, and cannot therefore mean two books.

When the prophets, whose testimony is contained in the books, are understood, and not the books themselves (in

which enlarged sense the exposition probably was by its authors intended to be taken,) then this objection loses much of its force; for those lights and founders of the church may surely, without violation of metaphor, be represented by the same symbols as the church itself. And in this manner Zorobabel and Joshua, the lights of the ancient church, after the Babylonish captivity, are also symbolized as the two olive trees and two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the whole earth.

Since the foregoing exposition was printed, the writer has received from a friend the solution of a difficulty, by which commentators have been much perplexed.

In verse 13 it is stated, that in the earthquake were slain seven thousand 'names' of men. Now the word 'names,' not appearing to make sense, is omitted in the vulgar translation; which the writer has in this instance injudiciously followed. His friend's suggestion solves the problem on his own principles, and removes every difficulty.

The abolition of saint worship at the reformation clearly explains it; for thousands of these imaginary beings existed only in the fabulous legends of monkish invention, and thus names only perished when they ceased to be objects of worship.

#### NOTE L.

IN Bishop Newton's exposition, the flight of the woman is represented as the consequence of the flood poured out by the dragon. But this is not declared to be the case in the prophecy; on the contrary, the first time the woman's flight is mentioned, it is without any notice whatever being taken of the flood; and the second time this flight is named, the account of the flood does not precede, but follows it. Thus there is no positive warrant for alleging that her flight was the effect of the flood.

Upon the view taken in the text, the woman's flight, although caused by the dragon, is not the consequence of the flood, which, instead of producing this effect, follows after it. The success of the dragon in corrupting Chris-

tianity and reviving idolatry, was the cause that made the Jews cease to become converts. This is the flight of the woman. But the Jews, refusing to acknowledge the authority of the beast, became an object of persecution to the Christians. Here is the flood poured out by the dragon; this flood being not the cause of the flight, but sent after the woman, as stated in the prophecy.

That the Jews ceased to embrace Christianity about the time when idolatry was revived (excepting always those who became nominal converts, for the sake of its honours and emoluments), will appear from the following accounts by Mosheim : in the sixth century, he observes, "a vast multitude of Jews, converted to Christianity in several places, were added to the church during the course of this century. Many in the East, particularly the inhabitants of Borsium, a city of Lybia, were brought over to the truth by the persuasion and influence of the Emperor Justinian. In the West, the zeal and authority of the Gallic and Spanish monarchs, the efforts of Gregory the Great, and the labours of Avitus, bishop of Vienne, engaged numbers to receive the Gospel. *It must, however, be acknowledged, that, of these conversions, the greatest part arose from the liberality of Christian princes, or the fear of punishment, rather than from the force of argument, or the love of truth.* In Gaul, the Jews were compelled by Childeric to receive the ordinance of baptism; and the same despotic mode of conversion was practised in Spain. This method, however, was entirely *disapproved of by Gregory the Great*, who, though extremely severe upon the heretics, would suffer no violence to be offered to the Jews." — *Mosh.* vol. ii. p. 98.

In the seventh century, he says, "the conversion of the Jews seemed at a stand in this century; for few or none of that obstinate nation embraced the Gospel, in consequence of an inward conviction of its truth; though in many places they were barbarously compelled by the Christians to make an outward and feigned profession of their faith in Christ. The Emperor Heraclius, incensed against that miserable people by the insinuations, as it is said, of the Christian doctors, persecuted them in a cruel manner, and ordered multitudes of them to be inhumanly dragged into the Christian churches, in order to be baptized by violence and com-

pulsion. The same odious method of converting was practised in Spain and Gaul by the monarchs of those nations, against which *even the bishops of Rome* expressed their displeasure and indignation. Such were the horrid and abominable practices to which an ignorance of the true spirit of Christianity, and the barbarous genius of this age, led the heralds of that divine religion, which was designed to spread abroad *charity* upon earth, and to render mankind truly and rationally free." — *Mosh.* vol. ii. p. 156.

From all which it is sufficiently evident, that these conversions of the Jews, even as early as the *sixth* century, were chiefly the effect of compulsion; and their sincerity may be fairly questioned: and it also appears, that the persecution of the Jews by the church of Rome did not begin till the *seventh* century. Bishop Newton supposes the earth swallowing up the flood, to be fulfilled in the conversion of the barbarian nations to Christianity. But how can conversion to Christianity be symbolized by the earth? Allowing the earth to signify the Roman Empire, worldly interest, the principle on which that empire was founded, may, without violation of metaphor, stand for the empire itself, or be represented by the same symbol; and thus the earth, or worldly interest, may, with propriety, be said to have afforded an escape to the Jews from the persecution of the Romish church. But the conversion of the barbarians was not effected by the hopes of any temporal advantage; for, being conquerors, the honours and emoluments of the state were at their own disposal, and they might have dictated any religion they pleased; thus the earth, as symbolizing worldly interest, could have no share in their conversion.

Other difficulties, which have already been reconciled with the view proposed in the text, do not appear equally reconcileable with the scheme of Bishop Newton. As for instance, the permanency of the woman's flight; no reason appears why she should remain so long a fugitive, if the cause were a transient one, such as the irruption of the barbarian nations. But on the view here proposed, the cause alleged will be coeval with the effect; the persecution of the Jews by the Romish church continuing throughout the whole period of 1260 years.

Again; the wilderness into which the woman fled is said to mean the desolate and afflicted state of the true church of Christ. Now, the woman, or Christian church, upon the bishop's view, being in danger, fled to the wilderness, as to a place of refuge; but how can her desolate or afflicted state be that place of refuge? She might be desolate and afflicted in her retreat; but affliction itself could not be the retreat.

Further; this place is said to be prepared for her; but if her desolate state cannot be the place of her retreat, neither can it be the place prepared for the woman, as applied to the Christian church. As applied to the Jewish church, its persecution and dispersion were foretold by the prophets, and may in this sense be said to have been prepared; while the escape and survival of the Jews have fulfilled that part of the prophecy which foretold, that the woman should not perish, but still find nourishment in the wilderness.

#### NOTE M.

IN a dissertation on the dragon and the beast, written in the true spirit of scientific research, by Mr. J. E. Clarke, the word *Λατεινος*, as the name of the beast, is objected to on various grounds: 1st, On account of its orthography, which should be written without *ε*; 2d, From the impossibility of determining whether it be a substantive or adjective; and 3d, On account of its indefinite form;—for if it be a substantive, what Latin is intended? and if an adjective, with what substantive does it agree? Mr. Clarke proposes (upon grounds that to the writer appear substantial), to substitute *Η Λατεινη Βασιλεια*, which makes the number 666; and while it affixes a more definite name, it also more accurately defines the nature of the beast, which certainly is to be understood as a kingdom or empire.

This name of the beast, computed in the Greek language, in which the Apocalypse was written, and by a mode of computation not unusual in countries where letters were equivalent to figures, makes just the number required, as annexed.

H	-	8	B	-	2
A	-	30	a	-	1
α	-	1	σ	-	200
τ	-	300	ι	-	10
ι	-	10	λ	-	30
ν	-	50	ε	-	5
η	-	8	ι	-	10
		407	α	.	1
					259
					407
					666

Nor is it any objection to this name, that it is equally applicable to both the ten-horned and the two-horned beast; one being the temporal, and the other the spiritual Latin kingdom.

The two horns of the beast are supposed by Archdeacon Woodhouse to be Mahommedism and popery; and he draws a parallel between them, showing that each of them is an apostacy from Christianity, characterised by similar features, founded on similar principles, and destined to continue the same period. In all which the writer fully concurs, in so far as these arguments prove Mahommedism and papacy to be two horns of Antichrist; but it does not follow from this that they are the two horns of the beast; for in the scheme here proposed, the beast is not supposed to personify Antichrist, but only one of the horns of Antichrist, that is, the papal or Western horn.

The horns of the beast, then, still remain to be looked for; and here the writer long hesitated whether these might not be designed to symbolize the Greek and Latin churches; which have a still nearer affinity to each other than popery and Mahommedism, and were for a time actually united. But he at length relinquished this idea, and adopted the view of Mr. Faber, for the following reasons: First, because the history of the Greek church belongs to the Eastern branch of the prophecy, and, having been already given, its recurrence in the Little Book would be a needless repetition. Secondly, as stated in the text, horns being symbols of power, and the beast a spiritual empire, its power depends more upon opinion than extent of territory; thus the clergy are the real supporters of its power, and consist of two



orders, monks and priests. And lastly, the number 666 being found in *Ἡ Λατιν Βασιλεια*, furnishes an additional argument for restricting the beast to the Latin church.

The earth is by most commentators considered to symbolize the Roman Empire, and there appears no objection to this interpretation here; for under both the Eastern and Western division of the prophecy, the Empire is still the scene of action. When so interpreted, this symbol must be understood to signify the Empire in its most extended sense, for other symbols are evidently used to represent it in a more restricted application. Thus the ten-horned beast symbolizes the Western Empire, which was composed of ten kingdoms; and the great harlot symbolizes, as the angel declares, the city of Rome, which continues to be the immediate seat of the ecclesiastical empire, or Romish church, now that the ten kings, or several of them at least, have withdrawn their allegiance.

Admitting the earth to symbolize the Roman Empire, does not entail the necessity of making the political history of that Empire the main object of the prophecy. It may be the scene of action, without being the principal subject of the drama.

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#### NOTE N.

OF what is meant by the political, as distinguished from the spiritual interpretation of the Apocalypse, the reader who is not already conversant with the subject may form a tolerable idea from the following observations of Mr. Cunningham, contained in his exposition of the Sixth Seal:

“In the hieroglyphical language of prophecy, the natural universe is used as a symbol of the political world; hence it follows, that a great earthquake denotes a mighty revolution in the world politic. The sun and moon, being the symbols of the sovereign or imperial power, their obscuration, the sun becoming black as a sackcloth of hair, and the moon becoming as blood, signify the extinction of the imperial power, or its ceasing to exert a beneficial influence on the affairs of men. The stars denote sovereign princes, subordinate to the imperial power, or else nobles and great

men. Their falling to the ground, like the unripe fruit of a fig-tree when shaken by a mighty wind, signifies the dethroning of the sovereigns of states, and the degradation of their princes and nobles, by means of sudden and violent political convulsions. The heaven or firmament in the natural world, is the medium through which the sun, moon, and stars communicate to us their heat, light, and influences. Consequently the symbolical heaven must be that in the world politic, through which the symbolical sun and other luminaries act upon us; *i. e.* the political constitutions and governments of the empires and kingdoms of the world. The passing away of the heaven, therefore, denotes the utter subversion and destruction of the political and ecclesiastical constitutions of the empire, which is the subject of the prophecy. Mountains and islands denote kingdoms and states. When it is said that the mountains and islands are moved out of their places, it denotes the subversion and removal of the kingdoms and states of the world politic." While the reader may form a pretty accurate idea from these passages of the usual mode of interpreting the symbolical language by those commentators who look chiefly to political events for the fulfilment of the prophecy, he may, on the other hand, judge of the nature of the events to which its predictions are applied, from the following view of the exposition offered by Mr. Gauntlett. His work affords the fairest specimen of this plan of exposition, first, because it is the last that has been published; and secondly, because Mr. Gauntlett does not profess to offer new views, but to select those which are given by the most judicious and approved commentators. Moreover, his work is peculiarly adapted for illustrating the difference in question, as there is a remarkable coincidence between his scheme and the one proposed in the text, in regard to the dates and chronological order of the events, although they differ so widely in respect to the events themselves. Mr. Gauntlett's view will be best illustrated by a brief sketch of the outline prefixed to his work, carried through the periods comprised under the Seals and Trumpets. The reader who wishes for more particular acquaintance with this mode of exposition, cannot find it any where better stated than in the original itself.

## VIEW OF MR. GAUNTLETT'S SCHEME.

	A.D.
The First Seal predicts the glorious successes of the Gospel of Christ, from the year in which the apostle had the vision	95
The Second Seal predicts destructive wars from A.D. 100 to 138. (The wars referred to here are those which took place between the Jews and the Romans)	100
The Third Seal predicts calamity, affliction, and mourning, from A.D. 138 to 195. (The causes assigned for these are dearth and famine)	138
The Fourth Seal predicts great mortality, from A.D. 193 to 270. (The causes of this mortality are war, famine, pestilence, and beasts of prey)	193
The Fifth Seal predicts the persecutions of the Christians from A.D. 270 to 323. (The Dioclesian persecution is supposed to be more particularly referred to)	270
The Sixth Seal predicts the downfall of Paganism, and the establishment of Christianity under Constantine the Great, including from A.D. 306 to 324	306
The Seventh Seal is introductory to the Seven Trumpets, into which it is subdivided	324
The First Trumpet predicts the invasion of Italy by the Goths, and the wars which succeeded	331
The Second Trumpet denotes the ravages of the Roman Empire by Attila and the Huns	412
The Third Trumpet refers to the afflictions which befell the Empire by the Vandals and Moors	455
The Fourth Trumpet predicts the extinction of the imperial and subsequent forms of government in the Western Empire	476
The Fifth Trumpet predicts the Mahomedan imposture, and its destructive success	606
The Sixth Trumpet foretells the farther successes of Mahomedism under the Turks, from A.D. 1281 to 1672	1281

Although the writer is not disposed to prefer the political to the spiritual interpretation, for reasons that must now appear obvious, yet is he by no means inclined to condemn or disparage it. If it be found that such an interpretation can be given, and that too in a manner that appears satisfactory to men of sound judgment and great learning, (a character which could not be denied to those who have maintained this opinion, even though the great names of Sir Isaac and Bishop Newton had not stood upon the list,) instead of making light of a doctrine supported by such authority, it rather becomes us to inquire whether the admission of one mode of interpretation necessarily involves the rejection of the other; or whether, consistently with Scripture, we may admit them both; whether the literal and more obvious fulfilment may not be intended to direct our attention to that which is spiritual and less manifest, though far more important. That this twofold signification of prophecy ought not to be hastily rejected, but deserves our most attentive consideration, will surely be admitted when it is found not only to be consistent with Scripture, but to be sanctioned by the highest possible authority, being no less than that of our Saviour himself, and his apostles; who are considered by the ablest divines to have frequently indicated the fulfilment of particular judgments foretold in prophecy, as intended to present to us the types of more awful judgments which were to follow; thus applying these prophecies in a spiritual, and also in a temporal sense.— (*See Woodhouse, p. 173.*)

Should this concession in favour of the political interpretation be considered as a sacrifice of consistency on the part of the writer, he begs leave to observe, that admitting this twofold fulfilment of the prophecy, if it should ever be clearly made out, will still be very different from admitting the propriety of affixing two meanings to each symbol, to be used promiscuously in the same exposition. Such a latitude has already been objected to, as violating the laws of legitimate interpretation, which certainly require that the same sense, whether it be the political or the spiritual, should, at least in the same exposition, be adhered to throughout.

## NOTE O.

THE interpretation of the four living Creatures is allowed to be the most obscure of any part of the Apocalyptic vision, no explanation, that appears at all satisfactory, having yet been offered.

Bishop Newton, and after him most modern commentators, adopting the suggestion of Mede, have supposed them to represent the four camps or standards of Israel; but, besides that, this view embraces but a small portion of their characteristics, and cannot therefore be called an explanation; it is farther objected by Archdeacon Woodhouse, that there is no solid foundation for concluding that the standards of Israel were such as the figures represented by these creatures; the whole resting, as he states, upon an uncertain Jewish tradition.

An attempt has indeed been made by Mr. Culbertson, to allegorise the characters of these creatures, in such a manner as to apply them to the whole body of the clergy or Christian ministers; thus the lion is supposed to be emblematic of their courage and magnanimity; the ox of their patience, perseverance, and forbearance; the human face, of their reason and intelligence; and the eagle of their penetration and elevated affections, soaring above earthly things, &c.

That such ought to be the character of the ministers of the gospel none will dispute; but that such has actually been the character of that body, a condition that appears inseparable from the fitness of these symbols as their type, is a conclusion which neither general nor prophetic history will in any way support. A type must certainly represent the thing signified as it really is, and not as it ought to be; and so will every other symbol in the prophecy be found to do.

These symbols occur near the opening of the Apocalyptic vision, in what is called the Representation of the Divine Glory, ch. iv. ver. 6. They are described as full of eyes before and behind, the first being like a lion, the second like a calf, the third having the face as a man, and the fourth being like a flying eagle. Each of them has six wings, full of eyes around and within. Their office is to give glory to God unceasingly. In the course of the vision, we find them officiat-

ing as heralds at the opening of the first four seals, after which they do not re-appear till a later period in the prophecy.

In the explanation of these symbols, so widely do commentators disagree, that one class, adopting the vulgar translation of "four Beasts," seem, as Archdeacon Woodhouse observes, to degrade them below the rank of human beings; while the learned author himself, proposing the translation of 'living Creatures,' contends that they are of a nature more exalted than Angels, being no less than the Cherubim around the Throne of God.

To reconcile a disagreement so wide, would be no easy task; to account for it is less difficult. Such is the splendour of the imagery employed in many parts of the Apocalyptic vision, that the mind, dazzled by the magnificence of the object represented, loses sight of its hidden or symbolical meaning. This remark is peculiarly applicable in the present instance; for although we yield to the cogency of the Archdeacon's argument, founded on the express declaration of Ezekiel, 'that he knew them to be Cherubim' (in a vision where nearly the same symbols occur), still it does not follow that this splendid imagery has not, like every other part of the vision, a symbolical signification.

Due attention to the words of the prophecy will constrain us to admit, that although representing Cherubim, yet they must have this symbolical meaning; and it will farther help us to discover this meaning.

In chapter 5, which follows, verse 9, they are represented as giving praise to the Lamb, expressly on this account, 'because thou wast sacrificed, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.'

Here then is the declaration, that they belong to the number of the redeemed; and therefore, however glorified their then state might appear, their redemption implies that they had previously existed in a state less glorious, being one that required redemption. But does not redemption imply yet more? Does it not necessarily signify that this imagery, however splendid, must in its symbolical sense be applied in some way or other to the human race? All doubt on this point will surely vanish, when they are declared to have been redeemed 'out of every tribe, and language, and kindred, and nation.' To the human race, then, and that too in some

very large and extended sense, must this imagery in its symbolical import needs be applicable.

And why may it not be a type of the whole body of the redeemed from all nations ; or at least the germ, the root of that tree, whose branches were destined to overshadow the earth ? Otherwise than as the germ or nucleus of that body, we seem precluded from admitting it by the subsequent introduction of another body, the 144,000, called also the redeemed. But this does not prevent its being received in the light above mentioned ; that is, as prophetically symbolising the whole body, by representing the root from which they sprang, but more immediately applying to those who had already received the benefits of redemption at this period.

These benefits are allowed to be universal, extending alike to the righteous of all nations and religions, to those who preceded, as well as those who followed the coming of the Messiah. Thus, a type or symbol of this body must be such as to admit of universal application to the whole human race. And from the nature of the subject, a symbol, to be characteristic of the human race, must also be prophetic, or must contain allusions to the future as well as the past ; it must embrace all its most striking features. In short, the races of men can only be viewed like the course of a river, beginning with their origin, and tracing out all their deviations and windings, till they flow into the ocean of eternity.

Before we proceed to shew the aptitude of this symbol, by inquiring into their origin, we may observe, that the number four is itself emblematic of totality, (*Woodhouse*, p. 106) and thus the number of the Creatures is applicable to the whole of the human race.

When we next revert to the most authentic records of mankind, we find that the present races of men derive their origin from four distinct sources. In the first instance they appear to be only three, to wit, the three sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet. From Shem descended Abraham, the father of the Hebrew race ; from Ham descended Mizraim and Canaan, the fathers of the Egyptians and Canaanites, besides Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, Asshur, who built Nineveh, and others ; while the sons of Japhet are said to have divided amongst them the Isles of the Gentiles, an expression synonymous to Europe, or the western world. (See

Gen. ch. x.)—But immediately after this genealogy, we find the family of Abraham again subdivided into two branches, one derived from Sarah his wife, who gave birth to Isaac, the father of Israel; and the other derived from Hagar, the bond-woman, who gave birth to Ishmael, the reputed father of the Arabian race. It thus appears that the present races of men, having sprung from four sources, are aptly symbolised by four living Creatures, as far as their origin is concerned.

In the next place, it is essential to notice, that the different forms of religion prevailing upon earth, are all comprised under these four, the Jewish, the Pagan, the Mahomedan, and the Christian; and each of them derives its origin from one of these primitive races of men. Thus the Jewish persuasion, beginning from Abraham, has been exclusively confined to his descendants. The Pagan superstition owes its rise to Babylon and Egypt; passing from Egypt into Greece, from Greece to Rome. Among the Arabian tribes, who are understood to have sprung chiefly from the descendants of Ishmael, arose Mahomed, the founder, at a much later period, of the Saracen Empire, and who gave birth to the superstition that has since prevailed over the greater part of the Asiatic nations. While Christianity, rejected by the lineal descendants of Abraham, became by adoption the inheritance of the European or Gentile world; and thus the four prevailing religions are to be traced to these four primitive races of men, which further marks the aptitude of the symbols of four living Creatures. Indeed, the very term life is symbolical of religion, in scriptural and prophetic language, wherein Christianity is styled ‘the life in Christ.’

Moreover, it adds no little to the importance of the view we are taking, that each of these three races of men has been made the subject of distinct prophecies in holy writ; prophecies as remarkable in the prediction, as they have been striking in the fulfilment. To enlarge upon them here would lead into too wide a field of discussion; it may simply be stated, that to the descendants of Abraham, as a reward for his righteousness, was given the promised land; while it was foretold that the Jews, for their subsequent disobedience and idolatry, should be dispersed over all nations, and become a reproach and a bye-word among men. Against Babylon and Egypt, were denounced the judgments of Heaven for their idolatry



and wickedness. To each was foretold its destruction, when in the height of its prosperity. Of Babylon, then the capital of a powerful empire, it was declared by the prophet Jeremiah, (ch. li.) that 'she should be desolate for ever;' and desolate she continues to this day. Of Egypt, it was announced by Ezekiel, (ch. xxix.) that 'she should become the basest of kingdoms, nor exalt herself any more among the nations;' and successively subject to the Babylonians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Mamelukes, and Turks, she has now for above two thousand years groaned under the oppressive burthen of a foreign yoke.—To Hagar it was promised (Genesis, ch. xvi.) that the descendants of Ishmael 'should become a great nation, whose hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against them.' How true this has been of the Arabs, who still lead a predatory life, and have never been dispossessed of the land of their forefathers, history bears ample testimony. Lastly, of the Gentile nations, it was foretold by Isaiah, (chap. lx. and elsewhere) that Christianity, rejected by the Jews, should become their portion; while Daniel and St. John further announced that it would be subsequently corrupted by them, and the empire of Antichrist established. This brief outline is sufficient to shew, the importance attached in holy writ, to this distinction of the primitive races; and renders it the more probable that they should be noticed in the Apocalypse, and be symbolised by the living Creatures.

Their description, or the particular form under which the living Creatures are represented, now demands our attention. They are stated to be all different one from another, and some reason for the peculiar figure of each is to be looked for. The first is said to be like a lion, the second like a calf, the third to have a face like a man, while the fourth was like a flying eagle. Following the order in which they stand, we cannot hesitate in considering the lion as symbolical of the Hebrew race, from whom the Messiah was himself descended, and is styled in the chapter which follows, 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah.' The second Creature, which was like a calf or steer, appears clearly applicable to the Pagan race, that animal being a peculiar object of worship among the Egyptians and others, and one of the first instances of idolatry noticed in holy writ. The third Creature, which had a face as a man, is not less

strikingly applicable to the descendants of Ishmael, and singularly accords with the description of the Locusts, in the 5th Trumpet of the Apocalypse, which are said to 'have faces as the faces of men,' a symbol which is applied by almost all English commentators to the Arabs or Saracens. The last of the four was like a flying eagle, which is obviously the symbol of the Roman empire, or the western Gentiles. Thus their figures also accord with the races of men.

It may next be observed, that each of the Creatures has a distinct office assigned to it at the beginning of the prophecy, being separately employed as heralds to announce the successive opening of each of the first four seals; and here also a remarkable coincidence appears between the prophetic annunciation contained in each seal, and the character of the herald by whom it is ushered in.

The first Seal, under the symbol of the rider on a white horse, &c., prophetically displays the triumphs of the Gospel of Christ; and is appropriately ushered in by the first living Creature, symbolising that race from whom the Messiah the Lion of Judah descended. The second Seal, under the emblem of a red horse, &c. foretells the corruption and dissensions about to arise; from blending the Pagan philosophy with the doctrines of Christianity; and is aptly announced by the symbolical representation of that race, which gave birth to the Pagan mythology. The third Seal, under the symbol of a black horse, foretells the introduction of superstition and fanaticism into Christianity; and is ushered in by the third living Creature, the representative of that race which gave birth to Mahomedism, and is distinguished for its proneness to fanaticism and superstition. The fourth Seal, under the emblem of a deadly pale or livid green horse, &c., prophetically announces the almost utter extinction of piety and morality among Christians, which is spiritual death, opening the way to the dominion of Antichrist. Accordingly, the herald which ushers in this seal is the fourth living Creature, symbolising that race, which was destined in the latter times to bear the most conspicuous part in raising up and supporting the Antichristian empire.

The general office of the four living Creatures, is stated to be that of giving glory to God unceasingly; an office which is in no way incompatible with the supposition, that they may

represent the whole body of the redeemed on earth, who can be none but the righteous of all nations. God, it may be truly said, is glorified in all his works, but certainly in none more conspicuously than in the creation of man; who in this is distinguished from, and elevated above all the other creatures of this globe, that he possesses the gift of reason, which prompts the sense of religion, and has the power of speech, which enables him to give glory to his Creator. And accordingly, in all ages and nations, some form of religion has invariably prevailed; while the worship offered by the living Creatures themselves, appears not to have been always pure and holy, from their acknowledging to have received the benefits of redemption.

These benefits are always allowed to be retrospective as well as prospective, or while one portion of the human race, who lived before the coming of the Messiah, looked forward to it as the means of salvation, so on the other hand, those who have lived since that event, look back to it in the same light; and in allusion to this, it is conceived that the living Creatures are represented as full of eyes before and behind.

They are described as having each six wings, being two more than the Cherubim of Ezekiel, which had only four. In their symbolical signification, wings appear to be emblematical of flight or rapidity; and in reference to the primitive races of men, may allude to the rapidity with which they spread over and peopled the earth.—While the two additional wings may be given for the further office which belonged to them under the Christian dispensation, to diffuse and propagate the knowledge of the gospel; or they may prophetically allude to the surprising rapidity with which this was to be effected. The wings are also declared to be full of eyes within; a position in which they seem adapted to the office of looking inwards, self-examination being the first duty of Christianity. ‘The kingdom of God is within you.’

Thus we find a circumstantial coincidence with the view, that the four living Creatures are designed to symbolise the successive generations of men, or all to whom the benefits of redemption extend, being no less than the righteous of every nation and religion, as well as of every age.

A degree of obscurity, however, hangs over the whole, notwithstanding the exposition of each part may separately appear satisfactory. The cause of this arises from the want of a distinct idea of what is intended by the whole of this vision, called the Divine Glory, of which these Creatures form a part. Without this, no satisfactory reason can be assigned, why this symbol should be here introduced. This difficulty, then, we shall endeavour to obviate.

That this visual representation of the Throne of God, can be literally intended as a real picture of any thing actually existing in heaven, seems a supposition too extraordinary to be entertained for an instant. That the glory of that Being, whose power extends over infinite space, should be revealed to man, or represented by sensible images, and the insignia of earthly grandeur, such as a throne and attendants, cannot surely be supposed. It is strange that the writer who contends for the literal sense in one part of this vision, should overlook the inconsistency of admitting the symbolical in another. Thus Archdeacon Woodhouse symbolises the 24 Elders, but takes the four Creatures literally as Cherubim. Viewed in this light, as real and not symbolical, it would be equally impossible to shew any end that could be answered by such a revelation; or any connexion subsisting between this and other parts of the Apocalypse. Unity of design in the prophecy clearly indicates that some symbolical representation must be here intended; and consistency of interpretation requires that such a signification be sought for, as will coincide with the rest of the vision.

Accordingly a view has been proposed, which fully coincides in both respects, and which seems not only simple and satisfactory, but, moreover, lays claims to higher antiquity, than any other which can be offered, being derived from the suggestion of Irenæus, as early as the second century. (*Woodhouse*, p. 110). The view in question consists in regarding this vision as a symbolical representation of Christianity, or Christ's kingdom on earth; the progress and final establishment of which, being the subject of the prophecy which follows, is here announced, as it were, in the exordium.

The meaning of each particular symbol, the authors of this view do not indeed appear to have succeeded in developing; though the general principle of their interpretation may be

correct. The cause of their failure in this attempt is easily explained, as arising from the nature of the imagery employed, which being prophetic, could not be interpreted until the events alluded to had come to pass. This appears particularly in the symbol of the living Creatures, where allusions are prophetically made to two of the most important revolutions in the Christian world, namely, the rise of Papacy and Mahomedism; events which had not then taken place, but which form essential features in a symbol portraying the spiritual progress of the human race. Aided by the light which history has subsequently thrown on this subject, we have attempted to follow up their view in the explanation of these four living Creatures, and now propose briefly to notice the remaining symbols.

In the first place it is worthy of remark, that the whole of the machinery of this symbolical representation appears to be borrowed from that of the old covenant, as a prototype for each symbol may be found in the Jewish temple, which will be shewn as we proceed.

That the first object which presents itself in a symbolical representation of Christianity should be the Throne of God, need excite no surprise; since it is equally termed in scriptural language 'the kingdom of Christ,' and 'the kingdom of God;' and Christ invariably gives all glory to the Father, as derived from and due to Him alone. The scene of the vision is in heaven, Christianity being also termed the kingdom of heaven. The prototype of this symbolical scene may be found in Judaism; the Holy of Holies being regarded by the Jews as the earthly abode of the Almighty.

The next symbol is that of four and twenty Elders, arrayed in white robes, with crowns of gold on their heads, and seated around the Throne. This symbol, which corresponds to the Sanhedrim, or supreme council of the Jews, typically represents the union of the two covenants, the old being founded on the twelve Patriarchs, and the new upon the twelve Apostles; to whom our Saviour promised, that in his kingdom, they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. In a representation purely symbolical, there is little weight in the objection, which has been urged against the Apostles being here alluded to, that St. John, who saw the vision, was himself one of that number.

Before the throne were seven Lamps of Fire burning, called the seven Spirits of God. These accord with, and seem to be derived from, the seven candlesticks of the temple, seven having been originally their number; and they seem to bear a symbolical allusion to the seven Christian churches, before noticed in the Apocalypse, and at that time existing in Asia.

The sea of glass, or glassy like crystal, before the throne, corresponds to the Laver of the Temple, also called the sea, which was used for the purification of the priests. This is obviously symbolical of purification by the waters of baptism, whereby mankind are cleansed from their sins, as the saints are said 'to wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.'

For the four living Creatures, we find a prototype in the Cherubim of the ark; different indeed in form as well as in number, but still the resemblance is such, that Ezekiel in his vision, where they are evidently the same as these, 'knew them to be Cherubim.' These have already been shewn to afford a symbolical representation of the generations of men, derived from four primitive races, professing four different forms of religion, and each distinguished in holy writ, by particular prophecies. These, when converted to Christianity, and purified by redemption, come to constitute an essential part of the glory of Christ's kingdom.

But the most important symbol of all, and that which most distinctly stamps the character of the whole, yet remains, being reserved till the beginning of the next chapter, the subject of which is the opening of the book of prophecy. This symbol is the Lamb, standing in the midst of the Throne, and of the four living Creatures, and of the Elders, as it had been slain; but now glorified for having accomplished man's redemption, and pronounced to be alone worthy to open the book. This type of our Saviour, borrowed from the Paschal Lamb of the old covenant, cannot be mistaken; and affords the clearest intimation, that the whole symbolically represents the glory of his kingdom, the progress of which is about to be prophetically displayed.

The imagery employed for this purpose, being taken from the Jewish Temple, is fully consonant with the general tenour of prophecy, wherein the two covenants are represented as in the closest connexion, the Hebrew Church being parent to the Christian.

It may perhaps be objected to this view of the living Creatures, as a type of the redeemed of the human race, that it involves a needless repetition, for the Elders forming part of the redeemed, appear to be thus included under both these symbols; and moreover we find, besides the living Creatures and the Elders, yet other bodies introduced afterwards, namely, an innumerable company of Angels, who seem also in some way applicable to the human race; and the 144,000, called also the redeemed, &c.

In answer to this objection, it might be sufficient to shew, that similar repetitions occur elsewhere in the sacred writings. One remarkable example appears in St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, (ch. xii. ver. 22 & 23,) where we find an enumeration of the same kind. Thus we have 'an innumerable company of angels;' and then, 'the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven;' and besides these, we have also, 'the spirits of just men made perfect.'

This might be sufficient to justify the exposition, without attempting to account for the repetition, which may with equal reason be objected to in the Apostle's view of the kingdom of heaven. Nevertheless, as some symbolical allusion appears to be intended, we shall endeavour, as far as lies in our power, to ascertain the nature of this distinction.

Having shewn throughout, that the general purport of this vision is to afford a symbolical representation of Christianity on earth, it is evident that we must look for the meaning of the distinction among the different classes of converts, of which the symbolical heaven was composed. And here the first point that strikes our attention is the important fact, previously foretold by the prophets, that some of these would retain the true faith, while others, or their descendants at least, would fall from it, and become followers of Antichrist. Accordingly this distinction, the more likely to be alluded to, as it forms the leading subject in the prophetic history which follows, seems to be intended by the two symbols; one denoting those who imbibed the true spirit of Christianity, and the other those who retained the leaven of former prejudices.

On this view the twenty-four Elders, being manifestly a symbol of the two covenants united, and being moreover in the glorified state, that is, crowned and enthroned, must represent the nucleus of the true Christian church; while the

living Creatures, who still retain the marks of a ferine or Antichristian origin, will represent those converts, whose descendants at least, if not themselves, subsequently corrupted the purity of Christianity.

It must not be supposed that this distinction is understood to refer to the two classes of Jewish and Gentile converts, which cannot be the case; for there is no doubt that there were among the first converts, true Christians of Gentile, as well as of Hebrew origin, as there were also of both who corrupted Christianity; thus we read of Judaising, and of Paganising Christians. And the apparent repetition in the symbols, the Hebrew race occurring under both, being represented by the lion among the Creatures, and by the Patriarchs among the Elders, is thus accounted for; as there were two descriptions of Hebrews, one belonging to that class which subsequently fell from the true faith, and the other to those who retained the purity of their religion. Accordingly they are here distinguished, the former still betraying, in their symbolical figure, the marks of an impure origin, while the latter are dignified by the human form, decorated with the crown of gold, and seated on the throne of glory.

The Elders and living Creatures being thus supposed to symbolise two different descriptions of Christian converts, the next question is, who are the innumerable company of Angels, introduced immediately after? For solving this problem, we have a clue to guide us in the manner in which this distinction is noticed, or in the time and order in which these symbols follow. Here three separate periods are clearly marked in the two chapters of the prophecy now before us; the first precedes the sacrifice of the Lamb, the second extends from that to the opening of the book, or the close of the apostolic age, and the third begins from that time. In the first period we find the Elders and living Creatures only; in the second, we have the innumerable company of Angels added, who give praise to the Lamb that was slain; and in the third we meet with other bodies, as the 144,000, and a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues. The two first of these periods, it is to be observed, had already elapsed before the prophecy was written, and seem to be here noticed, chiefly for the purpose of marking more distinctly the subject about to be treated of, and the precise time from which



the prophetic history commences, namely, the beginning of the third period.

Now, the circumstance which demands our attention is, that all those who are introduced in the two first periods which had already elapsed, are represented either in the glorified state, or under the angelic form ; while those included under the third period, which was then future, appear under the human form ; and this distinction points out the true explanation. The glorified state and the angelic form, cannot properly belong to any but those who had been already received into the symbolical heaven, or had embraced Christianity ; while the human form is appropriate to those who had yet to enter the kingdom. Upon reverting to the time and order in which the symbols occur, it will thus be seen that the Elders and living Creatures symbolise the church, before the sacrifice of the Lamb, or the death of Christ ; the innumerable company of Angels, those who had subsequently entered the church, during the apostolic age ; and the 144,000, and the countless multitude, will embrace all those who had yet to enter, from the time when the prophecy commenced.

But we have still to encounter a formidable difficulty, one indeed which at first appears fatal to the whole of this exposition ; and this is, that the 144,000, who are first introduced long after the commencement of the third period, are termed not only the true servants of God, but also a ' first fruits ' to God and the Lamb. But how can these be a first fruits, who appear only in the third period, when those of the apostolic age had already preceded them ?

There is no way of removing this objection, unless the 144,000 can be in some way identified with the 24 Elders, supposed here to symbolise the true church of Christ. And accordingly they are so identified in the prophecy, and that exactly in the manner required, or as root and branch ; for the twelve tribes of Israel are expressly declared to be the root from which the 144,000 are descended, not lineally indeed, but by adoption. (See ch. vii.)

Moreover, while the 144,000 are thus identified with the 24 Elders, the countless multitude who follow are in like manner identified with the other symbol, or the living Creatures ; for, like them, they are said to be redeemed from all ' kindreds, and peoples, and nations, and tongues ; ' and thus

we have in these two a symbolical representation of the germ or root of the then future Christian church, the Elders typifying those who retained the true faith, and the Creatures those who subsequently fell from it; and in this way the subject of the prophecy is announced in the exordium.

THE END.

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